

REGION VII PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL



THE RURAL FUTURE DESTINATION PROJECT (RFD⁷): “Youth Summit I, II & III”

ADDENDUM TO THE WHITE PAPER A SUMMARY OF REGIONAL YOUTH PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Spring 2008

SPONSORED BY:



I. Executive Summary

Region VII Planning and Development Council (Region VII) comprises elected officials of local governments and private sector members from Barbour, Braxton, Gilmer, Lewis, Randolph, Tucker and Upshur Counties. The region is a rural district representing 7 counties, 24 municipalities and a total population of 113,325 people spread across 3,398 square miles. Four colleges along with excellent staff/faculty and bright young students reside within the region. A state of the art trade school/training system has been investing in a workforce for many years.

As a spin-off of the annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) process, the Fiscal Year 2004 Flex-E-Grant Project (Rural Future Destination Project – (RFD7)) and the 5 Promises platform of West Virginia First Lady, Gayle Manchin, Region VII Planning and Development Council developed a youth orientated citizenship project focusing on the needs of distressed counties. Funding support was received from a variety of public and private sources. The effort resulted in the identification of a core group of young people representing counties within the region who received specialized leadership development training and have expressed a willingness to be involved in a Regional Youth Council.

II. Introduction

One of the challenges of rural communities is the out-migration of youth. There are organizations on the local scale in High Schools and clubs; there are programs on the state scale such as Boy's/Girl's State; there are programs at colleges throughout the region; however there is no such program that functions to involve youth on a regional scale. To address this issue, Region VII Planning & Development Council has been working diligently to develop a Youth Council. The project described herein was designed to springboard this effort. The foundation for the project was to engage young people in community leadership roles today in order to retain them in the community and have exemplary leaders for the future.

Region VII has exceptional capacity and potential. Four colleges along with excellent staff/faculty and bright young students reside within the region. The young people of this region are a priceless resource; unfortunately much of this talent has been exported at the region's expense for too many years. These young people, if engaged, could stay at home and contribute to unprecedented growth in this rural region.

Youth participation in regional planning and development issues was a need identified in the RFD7 Project "White Paper." Region VII Planning and Development Council responded by developing a regional youth project. The initial RFD7 Youth Summit was funded by a Flex-E-Grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission, which in turn receives support from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation and matching

funds provided by the City of Philippi and Freedom Bank. The project engaged Larry Peppers, Ph.D. to facilitate a simulated society (SIMSOC) exercise. Dr. Peppers developed the program and has conducted this exercise across the United States and overseas for 30 years.

This project was designed to build relationships with regional stakeholders and be a genesis of future leaders. Special emphasis was placed on distressed counties and ultimately served as the foundation of the project. The Youth Summit project was designed to be a day of change, in order for youth from small rural communities to experience economic and social competitiveness on a regional scale.

III. RFD7 Youth Summit I (October 2006)

The Youth Summit was conducted on October 14, 2006 at Philip-Barbour High School in Barbour County, West Virginia (ARC distressed county). Students from 10 High Schools were invited; 33 students from 7 schools participated in the program.

In an effort to gain support and encourage participation, the Executive Director and Staff of Region VII Planning & Development Council visited each High School (10) in the seven-county Local Development District (LDD). They met with teachers and students to explain the event and extend a personal invitation. Promotional materials were also distributed in an effort to promote the project.

Dr. Larry Peppers facilitated the daylong exercise. Dr. Peppers quoted Confucius, **"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand"** to set the stage for the simulated society exercise in the minds of the participants.

SIMSOC placed participants into a simulated community situation that does not have an organized society or social structure. Four groups role-play four levels of economic life. The simulation is nationally recognized as a learning tool for community developers. This was the first time such an opportunity was offered to students in West Virginia.

The exercise was met with rave reviews from the student participants. Many indicated that it was an experience like none other they had encountered. Many students indicated that it placed them in a position to consider life-changing decisions from a perspective different from the one that they normally assume.

IV. Regional Youth Summit II (May 2007)

Following the success of the initial youth summit, Region VII Planning and Development Council was able to utilize remaining funds from the original Flex-E-Grant project to bring these students together for another team building opportunity. On Saturday, May

12, students representing the seven-county area converged on Lewis County High School for a second Regional Youth Summit. Additional funds were received from local county governments to support this important endeavor.

Once again, the day-long event was facilitated by well-known author and speaker Dr. Larry Peppers. The training session provided a forum for students to explore their individual personality styles and learn new tools to help them improve their leadership skills. This session provided an opportunity for student participants to build on what they had learned in the earlier SIMSOC session, also facilitated by Dr. Peppers.

This session provided an opportunity for participants to focus on the importance of teamwork and consensus building while gaining a better understanding of the role of the Region VII Planning and Development Council.

V. Project Outcomes

The Regional Youth Summits ultimately resulted in the identification of a core group of young individuals who are interested in building a better community. Participants of both Summits were exposed to training that is atypical of traditional classroom work. By far, the vast majority appreciated the opportunity to improve their leadership and team building skills. Perhaps the most interesting outcome and certainly one that would impact the future of the region, was the interest on behalf of participants in participating in a "Regional Student Council." The Region has often considered the development of such an organization whereby students would have an opportunity to participate in planning for the future of their communities and the region as a whole.

VI. Next Steps

Based on the success of the Youth Summits, Region VII Planning and Development Council is hopeful that this effort will be the springboard for launching a new youth initiative aimed at engaging youth on a regional basis. The Youth Summits identified a core group of interested students who expressed a willingness to bring forth their personal knowledge of their school and community along with their newly learned skills from the Summits to form a Regional Student Council. The Regional Planning and Development Council will now look for opportunities to involve these youth in Regional Council activities.

The first opportunity was recently funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission. Region VII Planning and Development Council facilitated a regional leadership and capacity development event based on a corporate retreat model. The event, "Building A Bridge", provided an opportunity to explore the four cornerstones of community development, including physical infrastructure, social infrastructure, workforce

development and business development, as they relate to the region. The retreat attempted to engage old and new council members from the Appalachian Regional Commission's Distressed and At-Risk Counties in Region VII with members from Transition Counties. Student leaders involved in the Youth Summits were also invited to participate in the retreat. The event provided an opportunity for participants to engage in team building exercises and share ideas, success stories and lessons learned in a social setting.

Building A Bridge

Introduction: For the past 4 years Region VII Planning & Development Council has facilitated community development projects at the regional and state levels. One of the issues identified in the first regional and the annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) was the importance of youth involvement. This is a two edged sword issue because local youth involvement prepares local leaders for the future and might just be the incentive to bring them home after college. Rosemary Wagner, Executive Director of Region VII, and her staff took this issue to heart and designed and implemented two youth summits, one in 2005 and one in 2006. The next step to involve young leaders in community development was to mix adult leaders into capacity building activities with the youth. This is the report of such an event, **Region VII: Capacity Building Retreat.**

The Appalachian Regional Commission invested in the project through the West Virginia Flex-E-Grant Program; however, only persons from distressed counties were eligible for benefits. Chesapeake Energy Corporation stepped up to the table and generously provided funds to cover expenses of students/adults from non-distressed counties. Region VII provided staffing and funds to cover contingency items.



A Mayor, a County Commissioner and future leaders of Gilmer County participated in the "Building a Bridge."

Activities: This project had a goal of building leadership capacity in both adults and youth in counties served by Region VII Planning & Development Council. Rosemary Wagner was able to schedule Larry Peppers, Ph.D. to facilitate a simulated society (SIMSOC) exercise. Dr. Peppers assisted in writing the program workbook and has conducted this exercise across the United States and overseas for 35 years.

SIMSOC places participants into a simulated community situation that does not have an organized society or social structure. Four groups role-play four levels of economic life. The simulation is nationally recognized as a learning tool for community developers. This SIMSOC event included participation from students, teachers, Region VII Staff and Council members.

The Capacity Building Retreat was conducted March 15, 2008 at Philip-Barbour High School in Barbour County West Virginia (ARC distressed county). Students from Regional High Schools were invited, 27 students from 5 schools took part in the program. 5 Region VII Council members, 5 educators and 4 Region VII staff participated in the event.

Outreach: The Executive Director and Planning Coordinator of Region VII Planning & Development Council contacted each High School (10) in the seven county Local Development District (LDD) explained the event and extending a personal invitation. Project packets were distributed via hard copy.

The Executive Director and Planning Coordinator activities included but were not limited to: contacting all High School Administrators, booking event venue, booking catering services, booked a nationally recognized facilitator and oversaw/coordinated staff activities. Books and materials were ordered, transportation arranged for students and facilitators, planning meetings conducted and a set-up taskforce the morning before the event.

Dr. Peppers was paid to facilitate the daylong exercise plus travel expenses. Dr. Peppers quoted Confucius, **"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand"** to set the table for the simulated society exercise in the minds of the participants.

The students pictured at the right participated in previous Youth Summits. They considered it such a value that they returned for this capacity building retreat.



Adults listen intently as Dr. Peppers explains the "Natural Laws of SIMSOC."





Region VII Bridge Builders

Project Outcomes: This project organized 1 capacity development event. 27 Students, 5 teachers/administrators, 5 council members the Region VII Planning & Development Director and 3 staff attended this meeting. The goal and purpose of this Flex-E-Grant project was to build social infrastructure, develop team-building skills and engage the participation of local government leaders, private sector leaders and youth leaders especially from Distressed and At-Risk Counties.

Objectives to be met to accomplish this goal are:

- Involve 20 total participants from Distressed and At-Risk Counties.

The tally from distressed counties was 18 students and 7 adults for a **total of 25**.

A 5-point psychometric response instrument (attached with results) was created to capture the essence of the training exercise. Some generalizations can be made from the evaluation instrument; 1) The participants were glad that they participated (74% strongly agreed) and 2) they would recommend the exercise to others (83% strongly agreed).

Problems to solve: Region VII Executive Director, Rosemary Wagner, was interested in educating the students on the place and function of Regional Councils. 68% of the students indicated on the evaluation instrument that they knew more about Regional VII Planning and Development Council. She also has a keen interest in involving youth in Regional Council activities. 62% responded yes when asked if they would participate in a Regional Student Council. 12% responded maybe or possibly.

Problems Encountered: The biggest problem was getting involvement from all counties in the Region. There was much competition for time and interest, for example one county had a High School Basketball team in the State Tourney during the same week this meeting took place.

Program Sustainability: This was a stand-alone project; however, there are spin-off opportunities to develop the "Youth Regional Council;" funding sources for this activity are yet to be identified. There is consideration of adding a non-voting youth seat for each County on the Region VII Planning and Development Council Board. Council members would serve as mentors to students in their respective counties and provide transportation to meetings. West Virginia Wesleyan College and Glenville State College have also expressed interest in providing student interns to work with a Youth Planning and Development Council.

Conclusions and Recommendations: This was the second time a SIMSOC was made available in the Region. Feed back from the event has been excellent. It is reported that in Barbour County students are listing the Capacity Building Retreat on their applications for Honor Society and are asking when another event will take place. The program was an outstanding success with 91% of the participants indicating that they would recommend the SIMSOC exercise.

"We truly appreciate the positive impact that ARC Flex-E-Grant and private funding from Chesapeake Energy has on the future leaders of Region VII Planning and Development Council and this region as a whole."

Rosemary Wagner, Executive Director, Region VII Planning & Development Council

VII. Conclusion

Oftentimes, youth are simply overlooked when it comes time to planning the future of our communities. This unfortunate oversight lends itself to an obvious gap in our planning efforts. However, the Youth Summits have been an effort to identify youth from the Region VII geographic area and ultimately engage them in planning for the future of the region. Their perspective and outlook are unique and should be regarded with the same value as other members of the planning team.

The Region VII Planning and Development Council hopes to continue the effort to involve youth in regional activities and ultimately create a Regional Student Council that is actively involved in future regional planning efforts. "If the future of your communities is in the hands of these young people, then you have a very bright future," were the parting comments from Dr. Larry Peppers following the first Youth Summit session in the fall 2006. Region VII recognizes that these students are the next generation. Without their input, we would be remiss in considering the future of the region.

Appendices

- **Youth Summit Promotional Materials**
 - **Summit Evaluations**
 - **Photographs**

Youth Summit Promotional Materials

RFD7 Youth Summit

Region VII Planning and Development Council received an Appalachian Regional Commission Flex-E-Grant to host a gathering of the future leaders from our local High Schools in Barbour, Braxton, Gilmer, Lewis, Randolph, Tucker and Upshur Counties.

Dr. Larry Peppers, from Clemson University, has agreed to facilitate a Simsoc exercise for this leadership event. Simsoc stands for simulated society and Dr. Peppers is the creator of this group simulation game. Leaders from all over the West Virginia have participated in other Simsoc exercises; however, this is the first time student leaders in the State have an opportunity to participate.

The **RFD7 Youth Summit** will take place at Philip Barbour High School on Saturday October 14th starting at 9:30 AM and ending at 4:30 PM. Food will be provided. The Flex-E-Grant, City of Philippi and Freedom Bank have covered all meeting costs.

Students should read the first 32 pages of the Simsoc Manual if possible.

Before there was LOST there was SURVIOR...
Before there was SURVIVOR there is SIMSOC!

Contact rwagner@regionvii.com or 472-6564

Sample School Poster

Summit Evaluation Results

n = 33

RFD7 Youth Summit I

EVALUATION

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am glad that I participated in SIMSOC.		1	1	3	26
2. I was ready for SIMSOC when it started.	2	12	11	4	2
3. I thought I understood the game by lunch.		4	8	17	2
4. I understood the game by lunch.	4	5	9	10	3
5. I learned new things about society.	1		1	11	18
6. I learned something about myself.			3	13	15
7. I learned something about my friends.		1	2	12	16
8. I learned something about my family.		3	9	11	8
9. I learned something about my community.	1		5	12	13
10. I was happy about my team's outcome.	1	1	5	14	10
11. I would recommend SIMSOC to others.				3	28

What County do you live in?

Barbour	Braxton	Gilmer	Lewis	Randolph	Tucker	Upshur
6	4	4	10	4	0	3

What year will you graduate from H.S.?

'07	'08	'09	'10
13	2	7	9

Do you know more about Region VII Planning & Development Council as a result of this Project?

Yes **27** No **4**

Would you participate in a "Regional Student Council" if it were possible?

Yes **26** Maybe **6** No **1**

Region VII Planning & Development Council

Building A Bridge

EVALUATION

n = 35

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am glad that I participated in SIMSOC.			2	7	26
2. I was ready for SIMSOC when it started.	6	7	14	7	1
3. I thought I understood the game by lunch.		4	5	18	8
4. I understood the game by lunch.	2	7	8	13	5
5. I was happy about my team's outcome.	3	1	1	20	9
6. I learned new things about society.			3	15	17
7. I learned something about myself.		4	4	14	13
8. I learned something about my friends.	2	3	4	11	15
9. I learned something about my family.	8	3	13	3	7
10. I learned something about my community.	2		2	16	15
11. I would recommend SIMSOC to others.			3	3	29

What County do you live in?

Barbour **8** Braxton **10** Gilmer **5** Lewis **2** Randolph **9** Tucker **0** Upshur **1**

Answer if Student

1. What year will you graduate from H.S.? 08-13 09-10 10-1 11-2
2. Do you plan to go to college? **YES 25 NO 0**
3. If not, what are your plans? all plan to go to college
4. Would you be willing to continue as a youth planning group? **Yes 16 No 5 Maybe 3**
5. Do you know more about Region VII Planning & Development Council as a result of this project? **YES 17 NO 8**

Answer if an Adult

1. When and where did you graduate from High School? see next page
2. Do you have a post-secondary Education? **YES 8 NO** If yes, where?

3. What is your occupation/profession? see next page
4. Are you a Local Elected Official? **YES 2 NO 6** If so, what is your elected title? ___

Adults graduated from these High Schools

Brooklyn NY	1971
Buckhannon Upshur	1982
Clay County	1965
Lewis County	Not stated
Philip Barbour	1992
Philip Barbour	Not stated
Unknown	1968
Webster County	1976
Winfield	1961

Post Secondary Education of Adults

Undergrad	Graduate Studies
D & E College	
Fairmont State	WVU
Glenville State	
Glenville State	
Nursing School	Nurse in Anesthesia
Penn State	WVU, Salem
West Virginia Wesleyan	WVU
WVU	
unknown	

Occupations / Elected Officials

Occupation	Elected Official
Teacher	No
Retired Nurse	Represent Elected Official
School Administrator	Yes (Mayor)
Community Development	No
Office Manager	No
Tech. Integration Spec.	Yes (County Commissioner)
Assistant Principal	No
Teacher	No
Teacher	No

Forum Photographs



Youth Summit I



Youth Summit II



**Rosemary Wagner, Executive Director
Region VII Planning & Development Council**



Dr. Larry Peppers, SIMSOC Facilitator

CLOSING SESSION STATEMENTS

I Learned. . .

To help other people.

Society is hard to deal with and continue.

You should not judge others by class.

You should cooperate.

Everyone should work together.

You cannot trust.

It is harder to keep everyone together.

You can be easily misunderstood.

That society is the basis of lies.

To build alliances.

If you make alliances, things get done.

Everyone wants what is best for them.

To watch for conning.

That everyone cooperating is helping everyone.

To be more optimistic.

That the struggle of persons can be good or bad.

Not to be so quick to point fingers.

There is no guarantee of tomorrow.

Planning for what you are going to do and not taking action is to no avail...Enjoy today, must live each day to the fullest.

There is good in everything.

That you do not have to have money – just principles.

That no one is equal. There is always someone that has less than you.

It is hard to trust.

You can make enemies fast.

We need leaders AND followers.

That even if the green team had the money, others may have better ideas.

It is important to listen to all groups of people.

**These were closing statements from the
SIMSOC Exercise
Youth Summit I**

CLOSING SESSION STATEMENTS

I LEARNED. . .

That integrity and honesty are the first things sacrificed.

No matter how much power you could get, stay Blue (loyalty to your team).

Can't trust those above, only those you know.

Team and networking are important.

We can't be two different societies; we are one society.

Being poor does not mean not having things.

If you do SIMSOC a second time, lie to Dr. Peppers in order to get into the Green team again.

That being a rich society is not always top priority.

If you don't have power, you can build up to that.

Don't depend on giving enough to others, provide for yourself.

Everyone has to make their own contributions to make things work out.

Working with adults is fun.

There are different points of views.

Students make amazing leaders.

Don't have to have it all to have it all.

People can be accepting to new members and groups.

Communication and cooperation are key.

Everything I learned is everything I deal with in City Council.

Cooperation is essential in society.

Being creative is a key aspect of life.

Manipulation can make you or break you.

To make decisions as a group.

One can make a difference.

Similar tasks in different groups make different results.

We need to work harder to get youth involved in community decision-making.

We need a network of leaders.

In adversity, pull together as a team.

What we perceive is deceiving.

It can be fun.

Communication!

We have a lot of good youth leaders.

We need to work harder to get youth's ideas.

It's automatic to fight instead of work together.

Upper level groups willing to help no matter how snotty they seem.

Things are not as they seem.

It takes everyone in society to make it work.

Yellow should have accepted the "laid back" and "passive" labels and not be offended by them.

**These were closing statements from the
SIMSOC Exercise
Youth Summit III
"Building A Bridge"**

More Outcomes!

The following e-mail is evidence of outcomes of the Flex-E-Grant not normally recorded, but are so important.

Mike Kubina is an assistant principal at Braxton County High School and brought a bus load of students from his school to the capacity building retreat. Mike participated and was lucky enough to be a minority in the poverty region.



Mike is a great sport, head gear indicates minority member.

I enjoyed the SIMSOC experience, but more importantly, most of our students really valued their day... especially the green team.

Our local Development Office contacted us last week and ask for student assistance to work on two local projects. Then yesterday, they came bearing gifts: a DVD camera; several digital cameras; and "lots of fancy software." It appears as though our students will get the opportunity to put into practice what they learned last weekend. The city of Sutton is excited about the contributions our digital divide class, the state award winning school newspaper staff and other school leadership/scholars can make to our local community .

An Alternative Perspective of Moving to a More Prosperous Region



**"I really didn't want to move, I was ok with being red.
I just wanted to be a better off red!"**

**Grace Harris, Planning Coordinator
Region VII Planning & Development Council**

Region VII Youth Council

As a result of Region VII's youth initiatives, a Regional Planning Youth Council is developing (Spring 2008). Students from two local Colleges are now interns with a focus on the Youth Council. The following syllabus is an overview of an outcome of RFD⁷ and the ensuing youth programming.

Request for "Contract for Individualized Learning" Region VII Youth Council

April 2008

Contact:

Region VII Planning & Development Council
Rosemary Wagner, Executive Director

Purpose:

It is the intention of Region VII PDC to create a body of youth involvement to enhance the economic planning and development of projects already established by Region VII PDC. This "Region VII Youth Council" will include area high-school students as well as college intern/coordinators. **The implementation of the Youth Council will create real-life experience for college students acting as coordinators.**

Location:

Student interns will be able to complete many of the tasks and activities associated with this project electronically from their own personal laptops and telephones at times convenient for them and conducive to others' schedules. However, there is a vacant office reserved for student intern use located at the Region VII office in Buckhannon. Student interns are encourage to take full advantage of this location and the included equipment, such as computers, phones, copiers, and fax machines. Conference room space for meetings is also available.

Course Goals:

These real-life experiences will include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. developing professional relationships with local high schools, high school students, fellow interns, and supervisors at Region VII PDC.
2. hands-on experience at creating an organization;
3. familiarization with local elected officials and local private sector members, which comprise the full, adult Region VII Planning and Development Council;
4. familiarization with governmental procedures and policies;
5. introduction into project development, including access to and development of available funding sources;
6. education on the roles of Regional Councils;
7. dissemination of information regarding Regional Council;
8. coordinating youth input for inclusion in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) for project pursuits;
9. assisting with the implementation of selected Youth Council projects; and
10. familiarization to state and federal funding and governmental agencies

COURSE OBJECTIVES, RESOURCES/ACTIVITIES, EVALUATION:

Objective 1:

Create and maintain a positive, professional relationship with fellow interns, local students, Region VII staff, Region VII council and other public entities, as necessary.

Resources/Activities 1:

- Student intern will create and maintain a contact list, initially begun by Region VII PDC staff.
- Student intern will communicate at least once weekly with high schools students with updates, newsworthy materials, and motivational contact.
- Student intern will communicate on a regular basis with fellow interns from other participating colleges.
- Student intern will report to Region VII PDC members periodically regarding progress/status of Youth Council.
- Student intern will report in to Region VII PDC staff at least once weekly, either in person or electronically.

Evaluation 1:

- Copy of contact list
- Copy of communications sent/received
- Attendance at Region VII Planning & Development Council meeting
- Attendance at Youth Council meeting and committee meetings

Objective 2:

Assist in the organization of the basic structure of a Youth Council.

Resources/Activities 2:

- Given a standard set of By-Laws, student intern will assist youth in creating a working set for government of Youth Council, to include membership criteria, etc.
- Student intern will oversee the organization of necessary nominating committee, in order to fill a slate of Youth Council officers.
- Student intern will schedule and help preside over Youth Council meetings and committee meetings.

Evaluation 2:

- Copy of Youth Council By-Laws
- List of officers
- Copies of minutes from meetings. (Region VII staff can assist with transcription, etc.)

Objective 3:

Act as a liaison between Region VII PDC Council, Region VII PDC Staff and Youth Council.

Resources/Activities 3:

- As necessary, student intern will address issues of concern with council, staff and Youth Council membership in a timely manner.

Evaluation 3:

- Copies of correspondences
- Summaries of meetings attended
- Phone log

Objective 4:

Educate self and Youth Council membership on their roles within Region VII PDC, their responsibilities and available opportunities.

Resources/Activities 4:

- Student intern will include a "team building" activities at one of the initial meetings of the Youth Council, under Region VII direction and approval.
- Student intern will receive instruction on the CEDS procedure from Region VII staff.
- Student intern will review CEDS document and provide education of the same to Youth Council members, under Region VII direction and approval.
- Student intern will survey Youth Council members for their CEDS input

Evaluation 4:

- Report on Team-Building activity
- Copies of materials used for CEDS education
- Copies of input from Youth Council for CEDS consideration

Objective 5:

Assist in the selection of and organize the process for Youth Council projects, which are in line with Region VII PDC overall goals, as a result of CEDS input.

Resources/Activities 5:

- Under Region VII staff guidance, student intern will assist Youth Council in selecting a project to pursue.
- Student intern will work with Region VII PDC staff in locating funding sources for project selected.
- Student intern will assist Region VII staff and Youth Council in beginning, if not completing, project.
- Student intern will maintain contact with Youth Council members and full, regular Region VII Council members of project status.

Evaluation 5:

- Copies of project status reports

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Student interns must seek prior approval for all meetings, activities and contacts that they conduct on behalf of Region VII PDC.

Student interns will be provided with Region VII business cards, to be used for the sole purpose of identifying themselves while working with Region VII (for high schools officials, students, etc). They are not an expression of full, regular employment.

GRADES:

Student will be graded on periodic evaluation of progress toward above stated goals and objectives.

Grading recommendations will be made by Rosemary Wagner, Executive Director. Responsibility of final grade will rest with the cooperative college institution.

RECOMMENDED READING:

Gamson, William A. with Peppers, Larry G., *SIMSOC Simulated Society Participant's Manual*, 5th ed. New York: The Free Press A Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2000.

Region VII Planning & Development Council, *Comprehensive and Economic Development Strategies FY '08*. Buckhannon, WV. 2008.

Sobel, Russell S., ed. *Unleashing Capitalism*. The Public Policy Foundation of West Virginia. 2007.

WHAT'S NEXT?

If “capacity building” is the catch phrase of the day, we at Region VII PDC have certainly begun to build a future bright with promise and with full community involvement and capacity.

The Past and Present

Through the use of the ARC’s Flex-E-Grant program, we have endeavored to build up regional input from all areas in our communities: elected officials, private sector members, business, education, experienced adults, and high school youth. Additionally we solicit the input of members of industry, senior citizens, workforce development, social services, and health care. We are also currently making connections to utilize the young adults from local colleges as bridge builders between the local youth and our adult council.

The Future

It is the hope that the college interns will facilitate in the creation of a Youth Council, which will provide input into, and be a part of, our annual planning and project development. Thus, giving a voice to those who stand to be most affected by regional, economic decisions.

An effort to officially launch the culmination of several years of work is tentatively scheduled for June 2008, at Region VII PDC’s annual meeting. At that time, it is our goal to have youth representatives from the newly formed Region VII Youth Council available to report to and discuss items of interest with the adult council members, who have experienced their own benefits of capacity building beginning with “The Rural Future Destination Project (RFD⁷)” in 2004.

A Vision Realized

In summary, if we have built capacity and if we are building bridges in order to build a better economic future for our region, then ARC’s Flex-E-Grant program has provided the bricks and mortar to make the project possible. What began in 2004 with RFD⁷ is now coming to fruition.