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ABSTRACT

Rural areas traditionally have been at a disadvantage financially compared to urban areas. With their relatively high unemployment and low average incomes, they have experienced a drain of skilled people. The only hope for successful development planning is through multi-county cooperation in order to attract necessary skilled personnel. To succeed, the area must provide desirable goods and services. For example, a heavy initial investment in a revised educational system, by attracting better educators and new industry, would result in a constantly improving school system, and a healthier local economy. Intergovernmental cooperation could provide the resources to make this possible. Other attractions, such as reduced tuition for future teachers, could induce further inflow of skilled people. Education can thereby play an important part in an area's development plan. (BH)

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THE CHALLENGES AND REWARDS OF REGIONAL AND MULTI-COUNTY PLANNING 1/

by

Alan R. Bird 2/

Most rural areas in the United States are casting about for ways to compete with urban areas for their share of the Nation's wealth. Newsletters and reports tell of success stories.

However, the typical results of development planning by rural areas are rather dismal. And rural areas still count a higher proportion of poverty, lower average levels of educational attainment, and lower average family incomes than the Nation. The usual list of development priorities that comes out of a rural planning session is likely to begin like this:

(1) Develop recreation and tourism;

(2) Continue modernizing commercial agriculture;

(3) Bring in more industry to use abundant natural resources.

Show me such a plan...and nine times out of 10 you will be showing me a description of a planning area doomed to living death -- unless someone strikes oil or kicks up uranium ore on mainstreet.

Until recently, many rural planners have shared a common problem with local citizen leaders -- the strait jacket of too small a planning unit. In the United States today, east of the Great Plains, planners who work with a geographic unit with less than 250,000 people are likely to work with one hand tied behind their backs. In the big league competition with other areas, citizen leaders and planners and other

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supporting staff need this many resources to have a reasonable hope of offering the community services and facilities needed to attract and hold people to spearhead their development.

I'm going to talk today about planning -- the challenges and rewards of regional and multi-county planning. I think such planning can help both rural and urban people to pursue fuller, more rewarding lives. But planning is no magic formula. It can only be as effective as the leaders who use it.

I define regional planning as a cooperative process involving several States; along with Federal and local groups. I think of multi-county planning as involving several adjoining counties, usually within one State.

I will focus especially on multi-county planning for rural areas, and I want to put a special focus on education. For that reason, I am particularly pleased to be invited to your conference.

Multi-county and regional planning are enjoying a new wave of popularity, and the citizens of this area are already actively participating. Witness, for example, the Black River-St. Lawrence Economic Development District, and the Ontario-East Regional Education Center. These efforts offer hope of strengthening the economic life of all citizens of the cooperating counties -- Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence. They follow the precedent-making State planning activities commissioned by New York Governors Alfred E. Smith and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The National Setting -- Full Employment and "The New Industrial State"

Before we look further at the possible payoffs from planning in the North Country, let's take a few minutes to look at the national setting for this planning.

Full employment is now the American way of life. It could not be a firmer national commitment if it were written explicitly into the Constitution. And advisedly so. More or less full employment appeals to both moral and economic sensibilities of our citizenry. Positively, it provides the launching pad for new technologies and social programs that enable still higher average levels of living.

The desire for full employment is not new -- but our ability to maintain it is. These efforts are most explicitly and most systematically funnelled through the Federal Reserve Board, the Council of Economic Advisers, and the Joint Economic Committee, and so to the President, the Congress, and the national economy. Cabinet officers and their staffs, and other public and business and labor leaders play key supporting roles in spelling out this full employment policy and indispensable roles in making it work. I'd like to note two special features of all these efforts.

First, full employment policies are especially national in that they affect virtually every citizen and every company whether or not there are special related steps taken by State and local governments and other organizations and institutions. Contrast, for example, explicit manpower and education programs and policies where scope for local participation and local benefits are as varied as the local initiative, inclinations and resources of the various State and local groups potentially eligible.

Second, the apparent continued success of full employment policies and programs may be more a success of the planning process than of any one group. Full employment stems from continued consultation and action by many responsible groups in a highly structured environment -- the environment that is suggested by Galbraith in "The New Industrial State." Several congressional committees and the Congress as a whole are involved as are the Budget Bureau, the Treasury Department, the Department of Commerce, professional consultants, particularly economists, and banking and business interests. Relevant actions in response to any particular situation may extend over several months. These group interactions can be thought of as built-in stabilizers to ensure the continuation of a reasonable level of prosperity. There are also several specific stabilizers, such as unemployment insurance for those unfortunate enough to suffer temporary job loss.

"Full employment" is not really "full."

What do we mean by "full employment?" We all like to think it means that everyone who wants to work will be able to work as hard and as long as he or she wishes, that he will be paid according to what he produces, and that he can train for successively better jobs and attain them. This rosy picture is a reasonable sketch of our continued national goal. For years, economists have debated how to get there and we're not there yet. One camp, the generalists, had its fanatics who claimed that a few simple steps, such as ritualistic manipulation of the national supply of money was all that was needed. Another camp, the structuralists, pounded away at bottlenecks such as the fact that we had too many blue-collar or relatively unskilled and semiskilled workers and pointed to the critical need for extra measures before full employment could be realized.

Today, these groups have a happy and alert coexistence. Surely, responsible and responsive national monitoring of interest rates and taxes are essential to full employment. Just as surely, history has revealed they are not enough to guarantee full employment. Witness the continued scramble for more jobs for disadvantaged groups today when the pressures of wage-price inflation challenge a Nation trying for still more jobs. Very many jobs are vacant, of course. Some

vacancies are temporary. They result from people changing jobs, retirements, new firms, and other reasons. Many vacancies are chronic. They result from the severe scarcity of skilled and highly skilled people. They are mainly jobs in the suburbs and the cities, in booming new industries, and in key supporting services such as health and education.

Rural areas tend to benefit least and last from "full employment."

What else is needed to make full employment a national reality? Rural areas have a very big stake in the answers to that question. They have tended to benefit least and last from full employment.

Even when the national economy is booming, relatively isolated and sparsely populated rural areas have tended to show the least proportionate benefit in increased family incomes and increased employment. And when increases in national levels of family income and employment have slowed, the corresponding levels in rural areas have tended to slow still more.

One result is a familiar recital of rural woes. The pride of rural areas, the best-educated and trained young men and women, it is said, have left rural areas for the promising city lights. Progressive farming areas -- areas that have used modern technology, consolidated and enlarged farms, and produced food at cut-rate prices, have tended to suffer -- along with rural areas that had little agriculture in their past, less in their present, and none to speak of in their future. The ill-advised and futile cry of these areas is "stop this outmigration!"

If rural areas want to be part of the U. S. economy and if they really wish to assure their children adequate opportunity, they will encourage young men and women to realize promising career and life opportunities wherever they are. Any other course will likely seal the timeless doom of already disadvantaged areas. That does not mean that I see rural areas as an emerging depopulated wasteland, unless local leaders really wish to make them so. I see successful rural areas matching this outmigration with inmigration of skilled people. I see skilled people generally more mobile -- ready to move from one attractive area and job to another.

For districts, counties, and groups of counties with mostly rural residents, outmigration has <u>not</u> been the real problem. Outmigration has been a symptom of rural illness. A real problem has been that residents and observers have chosen to name it as a key problem. They have pointed to possibilities of a reduced tax base, the reduced support for schools and other services, the lower volume of local business, and a host of other "problems."

For the 1950-60 decade, flourishing cities have had as much outmigration as impoverished rural areas. San Francisco had outmigration rates as high as some disadvantaged counties of Alabama. And we would expect outmigration rates in San Francisco and other attractive cities to go still higher. If rural areas are to flourish, we would expect their outmigration rates to keep pace with these leading cities. It makes sense. Why?

Even a swinging city like San Francisco can't possibly hope to provide job and income opportunities, careers, and ways of living that meet the needs of all its citizens throughout their life cycles. The bright young junior executive may seek broadening experience in a company in the East or the South, or perhaps be transferred for his own good, or start out "on his own" in another city. The graduating student may seek a job in a distant city whose firms have a special need for his skills.

What separates leading cities from depressed areas is not the rate of outmigration. The key difference is that these cities and, more still, their suburbs attract many many inmigrants. As is well known, some cities also attract disadvantaged rural people to swell the misery of their ghettoes. Flourishing cities tend to attract relatively high numbers of higher-income, better trained, and better educated people. The San Francisco company has little trouble in replacing the young executive who left, either by local promotion or transfer or hiring from elsewhere. The San Francisco college has no trouble recruiting another student.

Contrast the plight of many depressed rural areas. Continued outmigration has not been matched or exceeded by inmigration. The odds are great that it never will -- unless some very special approaches are used by local leaders in conjunction with all levels of government and all private sectors.

The Planning Challenges Facing Regional and Multi-County Areas

People are the proper focus of multi-county development planning. Bringing in significant numbers of skilled, higher income people to work and live in the district is a likely crucial development step. This inmigration enables thriving local industry to support adequate community services and permits promising young district citizens to seek their fortunes elsewhere without draining the district of needed skills and leadership. Without the influx of these skilled people, local communities would be unable to prepare their own young people to compete adequately in college and job markets.

Yet these skilled people must be put to work. They will do the district no good if they are kept as pets -- if inmigration is only a symptomatic cure for area depression. To assure adequate development of an area, it must produce goods and services that can be sold to the rest of the Nation -- preferably goods and services for which there is a continuing and expanding demand -- a demand that rises rapidly as family incomes and total population of the United States increase. More than that, the area must have an industry mix that requires sufficient skilled, high-income people to assure significant continued in and outmigration of such people. For such skilled people to function effectively, they must have local colleagues for consultation and stimulation. And they must have access to further skilled people in the supporting services they inevitably need. This snowballing of needs of skilled people has led, for example, to concentrations of insurance firms in parts of New England, of stockbrokers, advertising agencies and publishing houses in New York City, of defense-related research and development complexes at a few major areas such as Cambridge and Boston, Mass., and southern California.

The challenge of district planners is not difficult. It is next to impossible. For almost any community or group of communities, even a thriving city, the Nation would do quite well if that place didn't exist. Yes, if Podunkville or Big Deal City dropped out of sight today and took all its worthy citizens with it, the Nation would read an extra headline or two, shrug and carry on. On the other hand, if government programs combine with local leadership and energy to make a local development effort successful, such a self-fulfilling prophecy can be assured -- but only for a very few places at any one time.

Ways a multi-county area may meet the planning challenge.

Let's look at ways a district might meet this planning challenge.

First, it seems wise to explore whether a proposed district or multi-county area has enough resources to offer reasonable hope of successful development planning. Most generalizations about planning are probably wrong -- except this one, perhaps. With that warning, I would judge that, east of the hundredth meridian, a district plan has little chance of success unless the population of the cooperating counties is at least 250,000. For such a population, there is reasonable hope that community services and facilities needed to attract and hold skilled people can be provided without disproportionate continuing subsidies.

Rightfully, to make its way in the Nation, each community, as with each responsible individual, looks at what they can produce and sell so that they may enjoy increased benefits in return. For a typical rural

area, especially a relatively disadvantaged one, the list of development priorities is likely to begin like this:

(1) Develop recreation and tourism;

(2) Continue modernizing commercial agriculture;

(3) Bring in more industry to use abundant natural resources.

This is the living death formula. Why?

Surely, recreation and tourism have a place in every development plan. And therein lies a warning. Areas that seek more dollars from recreation must compete with Disneyland and the Statue of Liberty as well as other areas that have recently discovered they are a fisherman's paradise or a family retreat with all-round swimming, boating, picnicking, not to mention bugs, sand, and traffic jams. Isolated rural areas must also compete with the trend toward man-made, year-round vacation retreats within commuting time of large cities, with the swimming pools, country clubs and other increasingly common recreational prerequisites of suburbia, with the increasing promotion and supporting services for major tourist attractions on a State and multi-State basis and with the added lures to foreign travel. Aspiring recreation areas must compete with the observed tendency for people to favor relatively passive leisure activities that are near-at-hand, such as watching television or chatting with friends, and the implied favoring of suburbia for these activities. They must also compete with organized conventions that favor large accessible facilities and with summer camps and other organized recreation where ready access to major cities may also be important. A rural area may console itself because the summer recreation it attracts adds little to the school enrollment during the regular year. This pride might be compared to that of a man who congratulates himself on his big savings on food, clothing, and entertainment because he sleeps so much.

Further modernizing agriculture is, of course, always a good thing to do. There will always be room for change and improvement in any firm or industry, just as there is in any family or individual. A few areas may have legitimate hopes of producing new crops or further processing what is already produced locally. However, for most areas, including productive commercial farming areas, I'm willing to bet that the bulk of the contribution by agriculture to local development has already been made. The changes yet to be made may round out an already promising development program but will seldom provide the key thrust for revival of a depressed area. Extra processing of foods may provide some added local employment, but that addition is likely to be a few highly skilled people or a large number of semiskilled workers, mainly women. Farm modernization may result in less employment and that employment will

likely be for highly skilled people. Many of those now working on farms will be displaced and have urgent need for nonfarm jobs. Even in thriving areas, the demand for vocational agriculture has probably reached its peak. Farmers of the future and their advisors and workers in supporting industries are likely to need broader training, many at college level.

Natural resources have intuitive promise as the launching pad of a development program. For most depressed rural areas, this promise will probably be broken. If the promise seems real, we may just as naturally ask why it has not been fulfilled long ago. Perhaps the area was too distant from markets; perhaps it was exploited long ago. If the promise persists, a hard look may reveal that the proposed natural resource oriented industries tend to be firms that other areas don't want. These include such polluters of air and water as paper mills, cement plants, quarries, and sugar mills. They may include other facilities where isolation is desired. Examples are city and county dumps, auto graveyards, prison farms, nudist colonies, and centers for treatment of communicable disease. Still further isolation favors rocket test ranges and centers for research on nerve gas, for example. Apart from what natural resources may add to the tourist and recreation industry, promising installations such as paper mills and cement plants are increasingly automated. What little labor they need (and most buildings and equipment) will likely come from outside the depressed area where the needed high levels of up-to-date specialized training can be secured.

We have now looked at three development options -- recreation and tourism, strengthening commercial agriculture, and expanding natural resource oriented industries. All these options have possible local contributions. But for these options, the pay-off seems more certain from planning and related program activities at a regional, multi-State, or State level than at a local, county or multi-county level. Support for this viewpoint can be found in the planning and programming experience of such organizations as TVA various regional (development) commissions established under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, and various river basin planning commissions. Technical training and other services supporting these development options might similarly be most fruitfully planned and executed in cooperation with appropriate State and regional groups.

Education as a "development industry."

Let's look at further development options.

Rural areas need to identify and produce large quantities of new goods and services demanded by U. S. citizens -- preferably those goods and services for which there is a large, steady, continuing and expanding demand. We may think immediately of bubble gum, flush toilets, television commercials, politcal conventions, and football spectaculars. But I believe there are even more basic demands. Education is one.

The education industry deserves central billing in the initial development plans of any area. I'm not thinking merely of the need to ensure that every local citizen has enough education to have and to hold a job. I'm thinking of the crying need, the virtually insatiable need for trained and educated people throughout the country. Not all rural areas and, indeed, not all urban areas can hope to succeed in making education a key "export" industry. If an area can, however, it's a pity to miss the opportunity. A rural area that is reasonably accessible to major population centers and one that can be made scenically and socially attractive could consider catering to this market for educated people. Such an area could set out to educate and train many thousands of people from elsewhere in the United States, as well as local citizens. Such an area can succeed if it can provide a better education at a competitive cost. At the same time, initial development costs will likely be heavy -- much heavier than any multi-county area can bear without outside help.

You may think your district shows promise of expansion as a producer of educated and trained people. The area has several undergraduate colleges and a branch of the State university system. Yet more may be needed to attract several times the present enrollment. Schools of more national scope may be noted for particular subjects. In the climate of today's campus, some new approaches to instruction may be needed. For example, a melding of the European tutorial system with traditional American technical excellence may provide an attractive form of college life, and not necessarily a more costly one. Broadened graduate programs may be needed. Such experimentation at one or two colleges could provide an improved design for college living for possible application in other colleges.

To a group of educators such as this one, it is patently unnecessary to point to the need for good teachers. What does it take to attract good faculty? A one-word answer is "money." But money is not enough. Polluted rivers and neglected fields may discourage a promising applicant. Yet I doubt they are telling handicaps. They may even make our candidate feel at home. We can be sure, however, that a faculty member who brings his family to a campus with schools and health facilities clearly inferior to those they have known is either technically incompetent or dedicated to the point that his poor judgment makes him a poor teacher.

What makes a good school system? Mechanical criteria on size of enrollment may be treacherous. I suspect many of you have survived, even enjoyed classes of from one to 60. At least we might agree on the need for a good curriculum. I suspect our aspiring faculty member would not accept a high school unless it offered both college preparatory courses and some college level courses, including advanced mathematics.

Professors' children don't necessarily make good professors. Why should they? After all, many professors don't. Accordingly, our faculty-to-be would probably expect a range of vocational offerings and classes for the specially handicapped and specially gifted, as well as year-round physical education, recreation, sports and adult education programs.

Our faculty man expects grammar schools and other school and community programs to prepare his younger children for such a high school. He can be expected to look for such signals as a foreign language offering in the lower grades and a general atmosphere of active experimentation and improvement. This atmosphere would include aggressive attention to teachers' salaries and working conditions, including the possible provision of teacher aides and systematic training programs for teachers.

In seeking such a progressive school system, our prospective faculty man no doubt has the support of other trained and skilled people who would seek jobs in the area as other local industries expand or national companies seek to take advantage of the local supply of skilled labor by locating branch plants. Such companies could be expected to supplement limited and general vocational training by on-the-job training and special course offerings of their own. That way, they would guarantee themselves a labor force skilled in the latest methods and familiar with accepted company procedures.

The critical need for a good "package" of schooling in one geographic area.

For our faculty family and the company man, nothing short of a package deal will do. If you tell him that he will live in a community with the best primary school in the State, that the high school 100 miles away is very good and the community college 100 miles away has an outstanding curriculum and still better staff, please don't expect him to wait till you finish the sentence. To a very real extent, then, the future of a multi-county rural area may depend on an initial concentrated upgrading of community services and facilities, notably, education and health services, in an area that permits comfortable year-round commuting for all family members.

To attain such facilities through continued support of several cooperating counties and other State and Federal agencies is a challenge. Unless the local counties have unlimited local sources of revenue, there is no other obvious development course, save perhaps the evacuation of the area to make way for a rocket range or the site of a new dam. Planning and joint long-term commitments may help speed the day when all citizens of an area enjoy equal access to such facilities.

Joint upgrading of education by several counties -- possibilities and problems.

Our faculty man may be less dogmatic and demanding than I have pictured him. He may admit the possibility that there are better school systems than he has yet known. Possiblities for improvement very likely occur to all of you. I suspect it is time to look at ways other systems in our multi-county area may enjoy some parallel upgrading especially if this upgrading shows promise of bringing additional revenues to the area. I'll try to sketch some examples.

Especially in winter, many roads may be impassable. In isolated areas, limited enrollment and the need for expensive equipment may preclude offerings such as languages, advanced science courses, and some vocational courses. A solution may be to offer such courses year-round in a residential high school and rotate enrollment term by term among participating schools. If sports facilities were adequate, including an indoor-outdoor swimming pool, summer school, or summer camp might be offered to students outside the multi-county area and so supplement local revenues to support the regular school year.

Limited enrollment at given locations constantly threatens to reduce the range and quality of course offerings. Such a threat offers a particular challenge to rural areas to produce innovative solutions. Why, for example, must teaching assistantships be so rigidly confined to colleges and universities when, despite the complaints of some students that "big names" never teach, many students and the assistants themselves probably learn and earn more from the use of assistants? Electronic communication systems appear to have much more potential than most schools, businesses or even government bureaus are yet exploiting. They might compensate for bad roads or the absence of roads just as they do for roads congested with peak-hour traffic.

Increased use may be made of "circuit-riding" specialized teachers. Enlargement of college facilities would offer further scope for "moonlighting" by college teachers at both the base high school and others in the system. Since not all faculty may be as inflexible as our faculty man, mobile homes may accompany mobile classrooms on circuit for some teachers.

Cooperating counties would understandably be concerned about quality of instruction as well as curriculum. These counties may wish to seek ways of guaranteeing a continued supply of good teachers. Students offered scholarships as prospective teachers might be required to serve, say, one year in an isolated school for every year of subsidized training, with the end reward of service in a base school. Such arrangements might be profitably extended to a State or regional level.

I would be out of touch with the times if I didn't add one special question. So we've looked at the promise of north country education from the viewpoint of business and faculty, but what about the student? Especially from the viewpoint of the average college student, what makes a good school system? If we seek a one-word answer again, some might expect it to be "sex." However, I think money would again be high on the list.

So far as net cost of education is a key factor in choice of school or college -- and I believe it will be increasingly important -- some further challenges can be put to local planners. First, to be competitive, an area must offer plentiful opportunities for at least part-time employment during the school year -- and so much the better if this work relates to a student's courses and career interests. Thus, the most attractive schools are likely to be near suburbia and its supply of odd-jobs and near research and development complexes and industry directly related to local school and college programs. This does not imply that only large cities can compete in the education field. However, it would help if several towns were connected to college and school sites by good roads and other transportation facilities.

Second, since college students are the likely original, continual, and often uncounted and unrecognized poor, the demand for seasonal airplane trips at student rates will likely snowball with college expansion. This demand points to the further need for attracting industry to a college town, especially industry staffed with a good proportion of interstate gadflies. Both the industry and the students would be more interested in being close to one well-serviced airport rather than surrounded by fields that had flights some days -- or sometimes.

For both students and businessmen, a third cost factor deserves a serious look. "Out-of-State" fees typically add to student costs. In some cases, these fees may enable lower "in-State" fees or otherwise reduce a State education budget. In other cases, this apparent saving may be short-sighted. One of the prime needs, if not the overwhelming need, of progressive businesses is an adequate supply of well-trained labor. Typically, depressed rural areas have an oversupply of unskilled labor. To employ this labor and make it more productive, businesses are likely to need many more skilled employees. Eliminating out-of-State fees at a local college -- or even further fee reductions for students in particular programs -- has powerful promise as a rapid and systematic way of recruiting such a labor force. And the student so recruited would have the assurance of firmer job opportunities. Teaching might be one of the programs favored by such fee reductions or scholarships. Such systematic recruitment of labor could take into account the needs of firms in each of the cooperating counties. Perhaps job quotas could be assigned to each county. The pay-off from such reduced out-of-State fees may be years ahead so that local communities, even a multi-county area, would likely need the help of outside public funds to meet the intervening development costs.

Skilled labor of our emerging developed district has other key needs. The most pressing are adequate housing and adequate medical services and facilities. A typical rural area is not a promising location for a large base hospital, although some such areas have successfully established "health" as an export industry. State mental institutions and psychiatric clincis are examples of facilities involved in such a program. More generally, health facilities and services provided in conjunction with schools or colleges have potential for undermining or reinforcing community-wide health services. Only a look at joint options of cooperating counties can provide a guide to the development of complementary services among counties.

Housing and physical plans to upgrade education and so stimulate local development deserve imaginative approaches that consider a wide range of options on their own merits. In rural areas, the temptation is strong to think of land as a relatively plentiful good and, accordingly, to favor low density building. Especially where ground transportation is relatively poor and winters severe, high-rise buildings with modern elevators deserve joint consideration in any building program. Use of such buildings may also enable education, training, job opportunities, and supporting services such as health and counselling to be more generally accessible to one another. Apart from the advantages of proximity we have already explored, this concentration of facilities would enhance opportunities for adult education, remedial on-the-job training, and other ancillary activities such as nurseries. Traditional construction of single-family homes is not likely to meet the needs of an expanding education industry. Mobile homes and other temporary shelter may have an important development role.

Conclusion

I want to close by making explicit some viewpoints that I'm confident we all share and that I think we need to share before further discussion. Our explorations this morning have looked at possible options for development of multi-county rural areas. For the four-county area that is our prime interest today, education looks like a promising development option. Apart from the strong local commitment represented by your attendance here today, the strong financial and technical support at the State level augers well for your future. It seems worth exploring further the possibilities of "gearing up" to educate much more than the present population of the district. Such an option is not equally promising for all rural areas or all urban areas of the United States.

Other industries not discussed today may have special development promise in this district. In assessing this promise, just as with education, attention would center on the extent to which such industries upgrade living and working opportunities for local people and on the

joint prospects for increased national and international sales of the resulting goods and services. Despite the recorded world seniority of land over people, idle people pose more pressing problems than idle fields. Idle fields may produce weeds, but idle people may smoke them. Making fields productive may make some people more productive, but will increase the need for new jobs for displaced people. On the other hand, if we focus first on making people productive, we may be better able to afford the luxury of well-kept fields -- and even unpolluted air and water.

I have stressed the need for a "development package" to upgrade a rural area. Education is part of the package and can be a key part. I have pointed to the need for ready access by the one family to good quality education at all levels and the need for proximity to other community facilities and services, including employment opportunities.

I have been equally careful not to suggest that any one town or one size of town or size of school system is necessarily the best. I believe any such statements may be misguiding and misguided. Within the one city, great variations in population density, topography, and other community and population attributes make any generalization based on city size quite hazardous. Certainly, being close to a city is no automatic panacea -- as ghetto residents would testify. What is even worse, the apparent success of a school system in one area may be based on factors not readily transferable to another area.

Recognition of the hazards of overgeneralization and the temptation to apply gimmicks to an inherently difficult problem do, I believe, provide further stimulus to the discussion today. There is nothing automatic nor easy nor obvious in the planning process that guarantees success of a multi-county effort. However, pooling of multi-county resources and staff allows you to consider a wider range of options that may benefit all citizens. How far you want to go is up to you. I hope I have helped provide a useful background for these decisions.