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FORWARD

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the second edition of FRED's Community Development guidebook. We received so many good comments and feedback from the first manual that we felt compelled to update the guidebook and expand it. From my own personal experience, the Guidebook has been a valuable tool in promoting economic development in my communities.

This manual focuses on "Community Development," which encompasses all of the improvements we can make in our communities, including quality of life and infrastructure issues, leadership, beautification, economic development, and a strong sense of community pride and involvement. Often a community will implement an "economic development strategy" and overlook the importance of the other critical ingredients of community development infrastructure.

Why publish a second edition? The FRED Board felt that from the favorable response that they received about the Guidebook, that we should update it to reflect today's environment. For example, the Internet can be a phenomenal tool for community development; this tool was not generally available when the Guidebook was first published. The Board also felt that there are fundamental aspects of community/economic development that have evolved in the last five years that should be included in a manual such as this. One reason that the Guidebook is being updated is to evaluate the tactics and strategies that were highlighted in the first edition, and provide insights and overviews of what does and does not work in communities.

Who was this Guidebook designed for? The Guidebook was designed for anyone interested in rural community and economic development activities for their area. The committee decided to broaden the scope of the book in the second edition to target not only rural telephone companies, but anyone who desires to promote community development. We are encouraging local governments, community development groups, rural utility companies, libraries, Chambers of Commerce, school districts, tourist groups, etc. to use the Guidebook.

What's new with the second edition? All of the chapters have been updated, and new lists of "Where to Go for More Information" have been compiled for each chapter. The case studies have been updated to include the successes, failures, and insights of the companies that were highlighted in the original case studies. Three new chapters have been included: "Starting a Community Network," "Marketing Your Community," and "Developing Your Local Infrastructure." Reference lists for community development contacts have been updated.

We have received many stories about how communities and individuals have used the Guidebook. Most people seem to have chosen one or two chapters that were beneficial for a specific project in their area. I know of a town with a population of 2,000 that

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consulted the “Community Foundation” chapter when starting a foundation for themselves. Another community patterned their strategic plan after the one in the manual. Several organizations were interested in the chapter, “Hiring Community Development a Professional.”

As we updated the case studies, we noticed an interesting fact about the companies and communities we profiled: all have grown—some substantially—since the first edition. I really don’t think this is a coincidence. Companies that have gotten active in community development, and followed the strategies outlined in this Guidebook, have helped guide their communities to stability and growth. We think that the manual can be instrumental in spearheading positive community development in other small communities.

There is a myth that I still run into today when discussing community development in rural areas—“We are too small to promote community development.” Well, I don’t buy it. There are many instances of very small towns being successful, and the Guidebook describes several of these. I personally have worked with Elk Falls, Kansas, pop. 89, which has had great success in their efforts. Most of the failures I have seen came from apathy, not from being too small. The attitudes, strategies, and processes described in this Guidebook can be applied in towns of all sizes.

In conclusion, we feel the second edition is a dynamic tool for anyone who is interested in community development. As most of you know, a project of this magnitude does not just happen. There have been many individuals and companies that have contributed in order to make this manual a reality. We would like to thank Alcatel USA, CoBank, Cronin Communications Consultants Inc., and Rural Telephone Finance Cooperative; Melissa Korzuch, FRED’s director, who has facilitated the complete project; Susan Koch, who has gone beyond the call of duty in writing and editing the manual; the FRED committee for their individual efforts; all of the communities and companies who served as case studies; and the many individuals who inspired us to publish a manual of this type.

Finally, it is our sincere desire that the FRED Guidebook will contribute, in some small way, to making your community a better place to live and work.

David Lewis
President, FRED Board

**COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT:
A Guidebook
for Rural
Leaders**