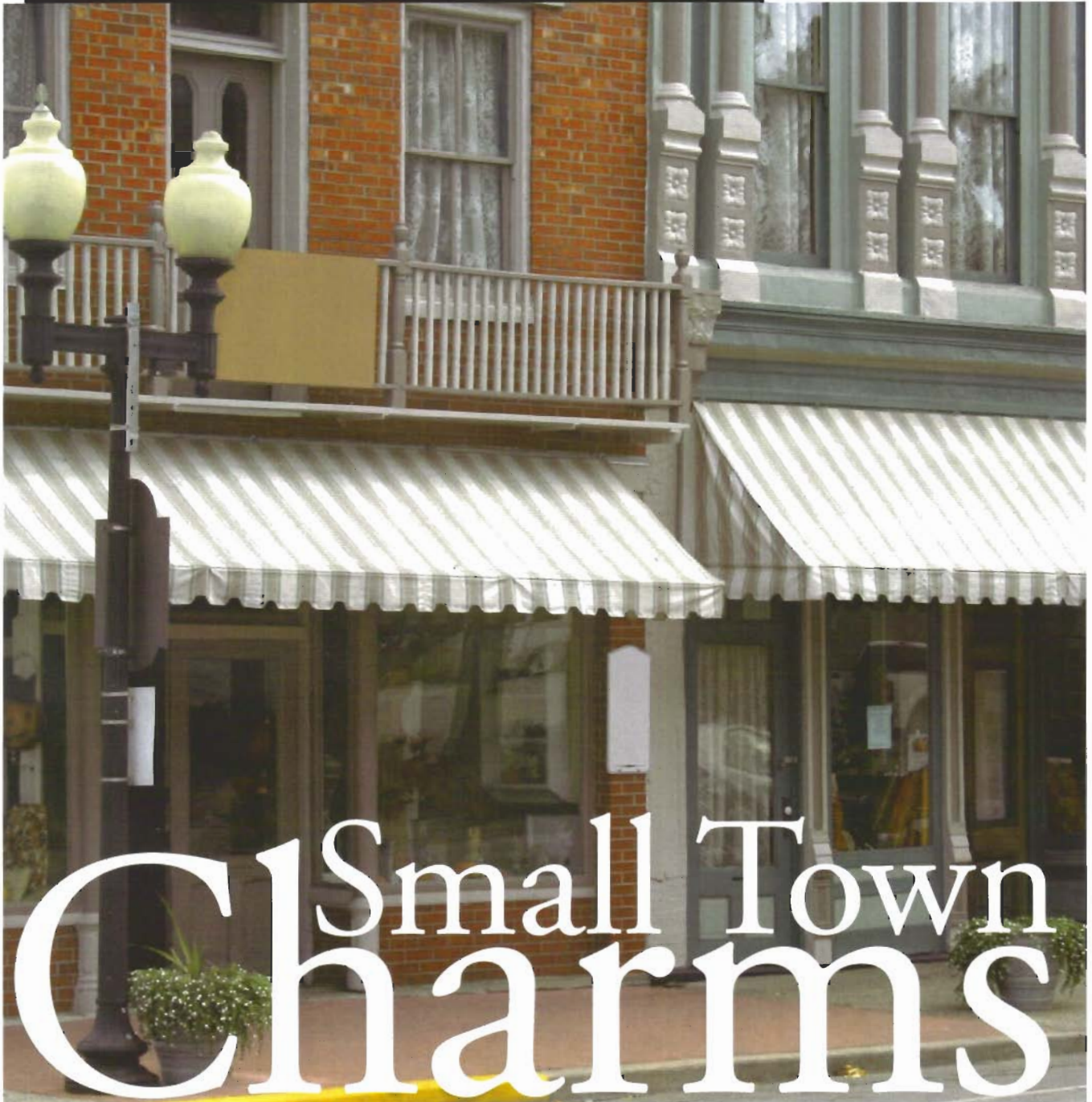
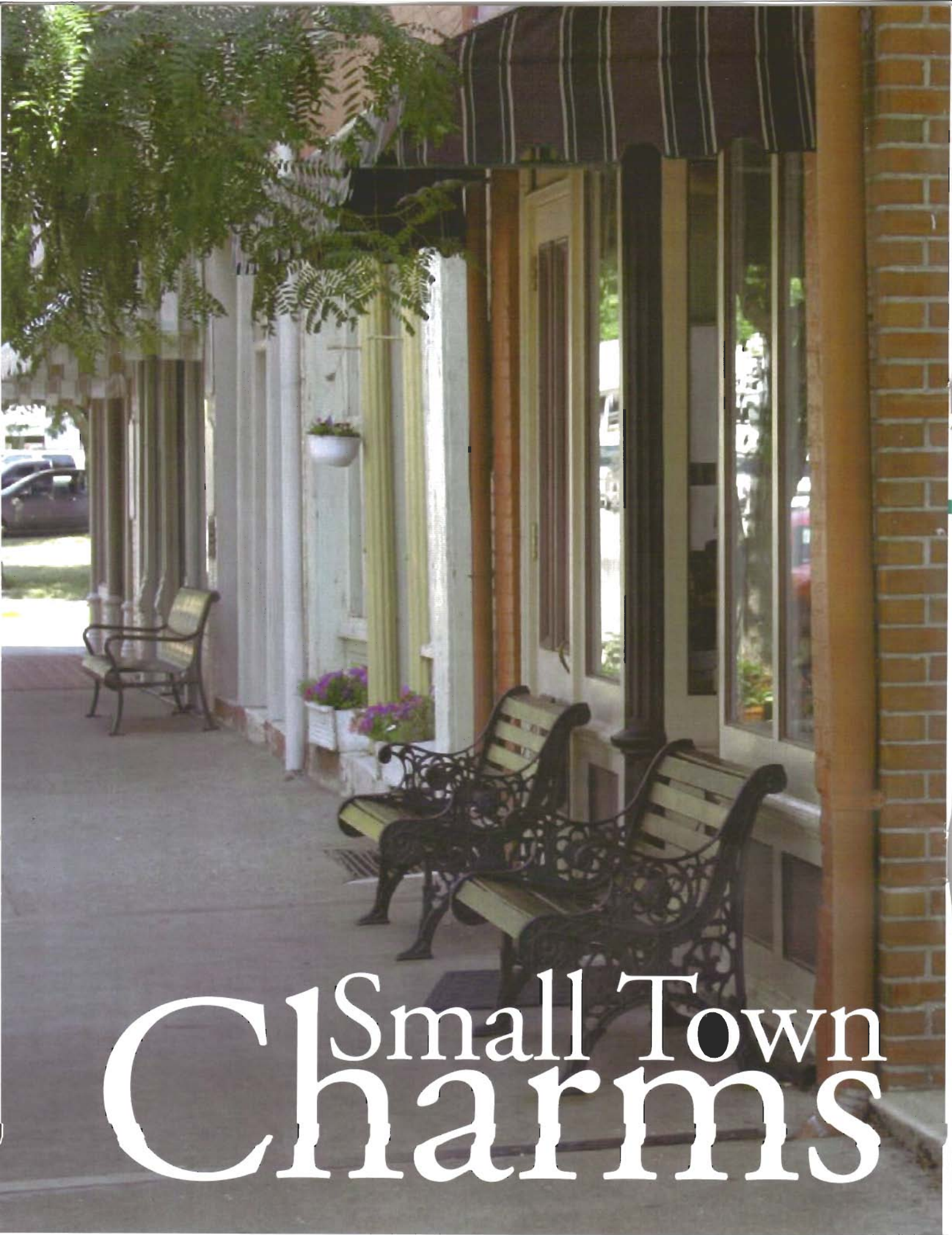


County

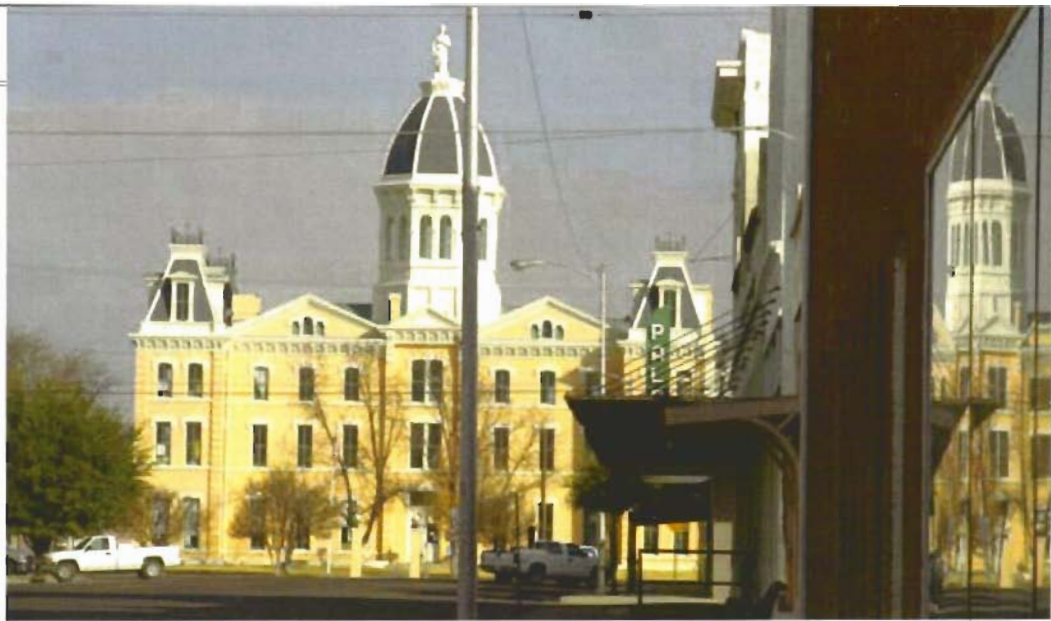
- TX RURAL INNOVATORS
- CATCH AND RELEASE
- THE END OF THE ROAD
- DISASTER CITY
- EMAIL MANAGEMENT
- NATURAL SUCCESSION



Small Town Charms



Small Town Charms



Texas Rural Innovators Forum sets out to show that good things do come wrapped in small packages

By Maria Sprow

HE MAY BE GRAY-HAIRED AND LIVING IN AUSTIN, BUT Bobby Gierisch will always be a small town boy at heart.

His hometown of Ponder in Denton County advertises itself as “a good place to live” on its Website, and Gierisch remembers sitting at the dinner table as a youth back in the day and counting all the residents who lived in the town, writing names down on an envelope. There were 196 of them. His class in school had about a dozen kids, and there was no kindergarten. It was easy to know everybody, and the small town had its charms.

Gierisch’s family eventually moved to Mason County and then Austin. He’s moved on from Ponder, but hasn’t forgotten it. In fact, much of his career has been devoted to helping rural towns like Ponder be all they want to be. He worked on rural policy in Texas House Speaker Pete Laney’s office for several years and then began working with the Rural Policy Research Institute, or RUPRI, which gave him access to challenges, programs and success stories from all across Rural America.

He learned about places like the Heartland Center for Leadership Development, which publishes a book titled *Clues to Rural Community Survival*; visionaries like Becky Anderson, who helped establish a regional set of arts and crafts trails and a tourism-based regional economy in small towns in North Carolina; and initiatives like the Nebraska Community Foundation, which has raised over \$100 million for rural Nebraska towns.

They were programs and people Gierisch, even with his extensive interest in rural policy, had never heard of.

“There were challenges everywhere, but I was impressed that there were communities and there were people and ideas out there that just were not all that familiar to me,” Gierisch said.

It occurred to him that if he hadn’t heard of them, probably other people in Texas hadn’t either. But why not? Why not have some sort of meeting, where people from across rural Texas could come together and listen to some innovative ideas, and maybe create their own?

“My commitment to rural programming comes from my notion that the people in small towns and rural areas are just really good people whose circumstances are such that in many cases, they are living in communities that aren’t moving in positive directions,” Gierisch said. “And I think a lot of that comes from a lack of thinking collectively about your future. ... If there is one thing I would like to see happen in our rural communities, it is for there to be some collective thinking about the future of the community. What kind of community do we want, and how do we get there?”

He wrote a concept paper, complete with a list of a dozen different speakers he felt could get local officials, economic developers, rural leaders and others talking and thinking, and soon he had single-handedly – though with the help of about a dozen sponsors, including the Texas Association of Counties – and voluntarily started the monthly Texas Rural Innovators Forum. ➤

Banking on Community Development

Those who have attended the forums so far have found them inspirational and motivational.

“Economic development in rural America is completely different than economic development in the rest of our country, and there are not many places that you can go to get first-hand exposure with people who have walked the walk and talked the talk, with people who have done successful things,” said Greg Snelgrove, the executive director of the Gillespie County Economic Development Commission, who has attended five of the six forums thus far.

Snelgrove said that in his mind, the forums have tended toward two key messages.

“I have learned two really key things from the process. The first one is that you have to do community development before you do economic development,” he said. “The second is that in rural America, you just can’t, unless you are very unusual, go it alone. You need a regional partnership with other entities that have similar problems and concerns. By yourself, you just don’t have enough buying power.”

Several forum speakers have shared those messages. One was Phillip Baldwin, the president and CEO of Southern Bancorp, which prides itself on being “America’s Largest Rural Development Bank.” Much of the bank’s work and business is focused on the Delta, a poor, rural area in Arkansas and Mississippi. It was formed by a group of Arkansas leaders who were searching for ways to bring capital to rural Arkansas.

The idea was formed to “take a bank and make it more than just a bank,” Baldwin said. The bank’s main shareholders are nonprofits. It moved into the Delta and began focusing on community development in the most impoverished areas. In Phillips County, Ark., the bank paid to bulldoze a dangerous abandoned downtown building and turned it into a park for kids to play in. The bank also paid for low-housing development projects and paid poor families to move into better housing so that their old, intolerable homes – which Baldwin described as not having running water or electricity and smelling like sewage because the infrastructure was so bad that the

pipes had all burst – could be bulldozed. The bank also engaged the community to create a set of strategic goals for itself, and economic development followed. The county decided to focus on sweet potatoes and biodiesel; the bank helped raise money for a \$2 million sweet potato storage facility and a \$25 million biodiesel facility, and the entire area is working on building the Delta College Preparatory Charter School.

But Baldwin’s message didn’t just focus on the importance of community development; he talked about the other lesson Snelgrove had picked up on, too, telling the story of how the bank helped the two of the county’s feuding towns – Helena and West Helena – work together. The two towns, Baldwin said, had been feuding for economic reasons for a long time; when Southern Bancorp came around, West Helena was suing Helena because the town had gotten behind on its landfill payment. The bank came in and offered to pay the bill off to stop the feud, then also offered to pay for the two towns to share a code enforcement officer to help with the dilapidated conditions of the towns’ abandoned buildings. The two towns agreed, and when they discovered the benefits of sharing, also decided to have a single fire department and a single police department. Eventually, voters decided to consolidate governments.

The key to all the success, Baldwin said, was implementation and long-term perseverance. He cited all the 256 books and studies targeting the area, and said that out of all the ideas for renewal and economic development published for the Delta, 90 percent of them had never been implemented, and of the 10 percent that were, 90 percent of them had failed.

“They’ve had lots of people come in there and not really accomplish much,” Baldwin said, adding that the problem is that most of the time, it was people coming in from the outside with government programs or grants and hoping to get a lot accomplished in a short amount of time. “It’s hard to do and make real change in three to five years.”

Snelgrove, who listened to Baldwin’s presentation, quickly took those two lessons to heart. Attending the forums inspired him to organize a regional effort between the economic development commissions in Bandera, Kerr, Kendall and Gillespie counties.

“Our common challenges are workforce development and affordable housing. One of our common interests is tourism. Tourism is a wonderful economic development engine because you have people who live outside your community spending money inside your community. All of us have a good tourism economy, all of us need to diversify into more primary jobs,” Snelgrove said about the cooperation. “Community development involves affordable housing. If you don’t have housing to house your workforce, you can’t grow your workforce, therefore it’s very difficult to go out and solicit new industry to come into your community.”

Handily Creating Economic Growth

Snelgrove cited another forum speaker, Becky Anderson, as providing some motivation and inspiration for building a re-



gional economy based on tourism.

Anderson is the executive director of HandMade in America, a regional economic development association based in the Western Carolina Blue Ridge Mountains. The organization's mission is to build the region's economy through the marketing of the area's handmade arts and crafts industry. As part of the effort, Anderson helped set up a system of "craft heritage trails" for tourists to follow. The trails feature all of the region's local artist's studios, galleries, bed and breakfasts, inns, historical sites and local restaurants.

The handmade craft initiative has completely transformed the region's economy, Anderson said, which used to be based on the textile, furniture and automotive industries. At one time, Anderson was the industrial recruiter for the area, and times were good. But there was an inkling in the air that the industries were on the move, and Anderson began sniffing around for other industries to recruit.

An old friend told her not to bother – she needed to build from inside. He advised her to look into the value of the handmade object, which he said at the time was a \$38 billion industry.

"He looked at me and he said, 'Western North Carolina has the most unique set of assets anywhere in the handmade object world,'" Anderson said, adding that the idea of attracting industry from within hadn't occurred to her, but after that, she had a new goal. "We began to strategize about how we could place handmade craft in every area of our region's economy."

She started by taking inventory of the area's historic craft sites and was surprised by what she found.

"You are your own first visitor. I bet you would stun yourself with what you don't know about where you live," she told the forum participants, adding that the area was able to meet its goals, utilizing the area's timber for paper art, having the community colleges offer art business boot camps and training, constructing a high-profile new home and its furnishings entirely by hand, growing the White House Christmas tree, and using a local author's children's book to create new products for visitors to buy.

The communities in the region all found a way to participate in the handmade economy. Even towns short on artists were able to focus on things like Christmas trees, food and music.

Chimney Rock Village, for instance, was a town with just 97 people, situated between a mountain, a gorge and a river. Because of the handmade initiative, the town changed all its signage to natural wood and stone, and bought an island in the middle of the river that ran through and made it into a park. They also invested in a high quality sound system, created a nice staging area, and began holding music festivals throughout the summer. For the first music festival, the event organizers invited every musician in Western North Carolina who had ever played at Carnegie Hall to perform; 1,000 people showed up.

In another town, Spruce Pine, a local children's book author bequeathed one of her stories, *The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree*,

MAIN ST

to the town to use in any way it could. The town took the book and started selling products based on food and toys and illustrations within it – the jail's trustees made rocking horses, the battered women's shelter baked walnut pies, the middle school classroom came up with a creative way to sell lumps of coal. A local businessman offered up his store front to sell all the products during a Christmas season, and within the first five weeks, they had sold \$62,000 worth of crafts. The book is now the theme to this year's White House Christmas, Anderson said.

But the shift from an economy based on recruiting industry to one based on tourism and home-grown entrepreneurs wasn't easy. Artists were worried the craft trail would portray them as some kind of small-town character; residents were afraid they'd lose their community spaces to tourists; and they all had to agree to share, not just their communities with tourists, but share the tourists with each other.

"We did something that has never been done in tourism before. We took people away from the public attractions, the public parks... and into a private setting," Anderson said. "When we were doing our planning session, the craft community, and then later the farming community, said, 'the minute I leave my studio, or my fields, I've quit earning my living.' We listened to them pretty carefully," she said adding that the solution was to "reverse the market" and have tourists come to the artists. But even then, people weren't happy. "It was the craft community who said, 'let me tell you something, lady, you are not going to dress us up in a cute little costume in a cute little village making a widget.' (The artists) came in protest and they were great. They held our feet to the fire and they made it authentic."

Sharing became an essential part of the new economy. Since Anderson and others involved with the initiative realized that the more attractions the area could offer, the more tourists would come, the initiative started to reach out to help other communities.

"To be in our program, you have to do one thing and one thing only. You have to covenant with each other. ... If Bakersfield can't make the money, then the rest of the towns give them their money," Anderson said, mentioning one small town where there was no public space, so the town and its neighbors came together to create a creek walk and park, as well as a florist shop, three bed and breakfasts, a café and five artisan shops in order to give the community a spot on the craft map.

Snelgrove said he found the idea of craft trails and maps intriguing because Texas already has a set of historical regional trails, and the concept of somehow cooperating and marketing them to increase economic development made "infinite sense" after Anderson's presentation.

About the Heartland Center for Leadership Development

The Heartland Center for Leadership Development is a nonprofit organization that focuses on developing leadership in rural communities. It deals mostly with leadership training, increasing citizen participation, community planning, town hall meeting facilitation, evaluation and curriculum development. For more information, go online to <http://heartlandcenter.info>.

Willing Residents to Invest in the Future

Tom Adams, president of the Hamilton Economic Development Corporation, has also attended several of the forums and said he now has several good ideas he is ▶

attempting to pursue.

"Bobby (Gierisch) has consistently brought some of the best and brightest practitioners of economic development from all across the country to Texas," Adams said. "The one thing that has struck me about all of them is that they all exemplify real and committed leadership. The things that have been accomplished have almost all been traced back to one or two or three people who just make up their mind that they are going to bring changes."

Adams said he was specifically intrigued by Maxine Moul, the president emeritus of the Nebraska Community Foundation, who came to the innovator's forum in May and spoke about the national transfer of wealth from rural areas to urban areas and the ways in which her foundation was combating the issue.

The Nebraska Community Foundation was created in 1993 as a means to help small towns in the state become self-supportive through the mobilization of charitable giving efforts, particularly through anonymous donations and gifts left to communities in wills.

According to the organization's Website, www.nebcommfound.org, "researchers in Boston College estimate that in the next 30

About the TX Rural Innovators Forum

The Texas Rural Innovators Forum is held approximately every 6-8 weeks. The next forums are scheduled for July 24, September 11, October 23 and November 27. To attend a forum or find more information, visit the Website at www.ruraltx.org.

DVDs of each of the forum's previous speakers can be purchased by emailing Bobby Gierisch at tex@ruraltex.org. Powerpoint presentations are also available on the TRIF Website.

years, more than \$41 trillion will be transferred from one generation to the next in the United States... \$250 billion will be transferred in Nebraska in the next 25 years, and nearly \$100 billion of that in rural Nebraska (places of 10,000 and less). If only five percent of this wealth was gifted to community betterment projects and endowments, it could equate to \$5 million for a Nebraska community of 1,000." Moul estimated that about \$281 billion would be transferred out of rural Texas during that time period.

The Foundation has had more than 27,000 donors invest in their communities in the last five years, Moul said, and the foundations

20 Clues to Rural Community Survival

Ghost towns are infamous around Texas, but with residents of most small towns getting increasingly older in age and younger generations fleeing to urban areas, how do rural county leaders keep their communities from earning their own sets of coffins and abandoned buildings?

The question of how to get small towns to thrive has been an ongoing discussion for decades, but Vicki Luther first found herself getting involved in the mid-1980s, when the agricultural economy was in crisis, land prices were crashing and some were predicting the disappearance of small towns.

Luther, one of the original founders and co-directors of the Heartland Center for Leadership Development, a non-profit formed 25 years ago that focuses on leadership training and community planning and involvement, has traveled to rural areas all over the country. Part of the association's goal is to extensively study the elements of thriving small towns and communities and make comparisons.

The organization has published a list of "20 Clues to Rural Community Survival," which was the topic of the May Rural Innovators forum. "It's not a recipe for success," Luther cautioned at the beginning of the discussion. "These are characteristics of a successful small community. We are very interested in what makes things work."

She, in her role with the organization, began talking to school administrators, doctors and anybody who would be in a position to know their community, and asking them if they knew of any towns that were thriving despite all the negative things happening with the rural economy.

The association took the list of small towns that were nominated and compared them to lists of small towns with some sort of favorable statistics. Then, they took communities that appeared on both

lists and began studying them in-depth.

As part of the successful community profiles, the foundation sends interviewers into communities. The interviewers look at the history of the community and economy, who the major employers are, what the major changes have been over the last 10 years, what kinds of future planning is happening, what sorts of community participation there is, and who holds the power. The interviews are both positional – starting with the town's mayor, judges, ministers, newspaper heads – and reputational, or with "the ones sitting in the café having breakfast, and you're trying to get a project going, so you go in and sit next to them," Luther said.

What Luther and the foundation discovered, she said, are 20 similarities between the "successful" small towns, which she defined as communities with 80 to 40,000 people.

The clues include things like "**evidence of community pride**," "**realistic appraisal of future opportunities**," "**problem solving approach to providing health care**," "**strong multigenerational family orientation**," and "**careful use of fiscal resources**."

Those attending the Rural Innovators Forum focused on other clues, such as "**willingness to invest in the future**." Luther said successful communities are often those that have passed bond issues, created community foundations and have high voluntarism.

"If I didn't think the town I lived in was going to prosper, and continue to serve my needs... why would I volunteer?" she said.

One characteristic each of the successful towns shared, she said, was an "**active economic development program**." None of the programs focused on attracting large outside industry, she added.

"The focus was on retaining and expanding current businesses," she said, adding that some started visitation programs between the area's economic development office and area businesses, where representatives would regularly visit businesses in person and ask them how the business is doing and what they need to thrive. "There is an emphasis on home grown businesses."

"If you are spending all your economic development dollars on

STATE ST

yearly endowments are at \$15.39 million. Using the community foundation, the town of Shickley, with just 376 people raised \$1.8 million in just three years; other towns have had large successes, too.

Moul said community foundations are a good way to raise money because "it is based in your community, it is led by people in your community who know your community" and because it provides a vehicle for asking residents to give back to their communities and educating them on the importance of community investment. Most long-time residents love their home towns; often, it's where they got married, raised their family, pursued their careers, and created a life for themselves, Moul said, but if nobody asks them to invest, they will either not think of it or not know how.

"It is the people at the local level who know who the potential givers are and will actually go out and do the asking," Moul said. "There are all kinds of charitable instruments people can use if they cannot give cash gifts. Most people (in rural areas) are land rich and cash poor. There are ways they can use their assets to convert them to current income for themselves, but also give them to charity."

Community foundations also provide stability so that no money is lost if, say, an organization ceases to exist after a donation has been made, she added.

Adams, in Hamilton, said after hearing about the community

foundation and the transfer of wealth, he did his own research and figured out that if his county had a means of doing what's being done in Nebraska – capturing just 5 percent of the outgoing wealth – that his county could save \$1 million a year.

"What we'd like to do is get the financial community, the bankers, the investment counselors, together and actually start a Hamilton County Community Foundation that would begin to solicit funds from people," Adams said. "If we could convince people, we don't want to get between you and your heirs, we just want you to remember your hometown in your will and leave a little... it would have a profound and lasting impact."

He added that that's one message he has so far walked away from the Rural Innovators Forums with: that "if we are going to maintain the quality of life in Rural Texas, we are pretty much going to have to do it on our own."

That may sound harsh, but it's not.

"It gives you hope," Adams said. ★

going to trade shows trying to attract that industry, the odds aren't really with you," she said.

Along with that, she said, prospering small towns also have an **"awareness of competitive positioning"** and a **"knowledge of the physical environment,"** meaning they take the resources that they have naturally and use them to their advantage.

In order to be most successful, she added, communities must "go out and find people with those ideas and support them." Many people with good ideas, she said, tend to be introverts, eccentrics or loners, working by themselves and feeling awkward about doing the moving and shaking that may be necessary to get their ideas off the ground.

The focus on retaining and expanding home grown businesses – more of a gardening approach to economic development than a hunting approach – may also be one way of attracting younger populations back to their home towns after college.

"Every small town wants to find a way to keep the kids at home," said Bobby Gierisch, who organizes the Rural Innovator Forums.

It's a matter of selling small towns as an outlet for bigger thinking.

"Say to them, have you thought about not getting a job, but creating a job?" said Luther.

She found one good example in a small town of just 400 people, after a local grocery store owner decided to sell his business, a small store with "five of everything, and what isn't there, you probably don't need." He sold it to a young local, a former bagger who was willing to experiment with different products in order to increase traffic. One time, he experimented with selling ready-to-eat personal pizzas. Another idea he had, she said, was to collect shoppers' grocery lists, go into the city, and do price comparisons. He'd add in the price of time and gas, then display how much the customers had saved by shopping at his store instead of the nearest city.

"It was a brilliant application of competitive positioning," Luther said.

Communities can competitively position themselves by knowing their surroundings and resources. Some counties have many lakes and rivers and can market their area toward water and nature lovers;

others, such as Marfa, may have a surprisingly thriving arts scene.

Every town has something, and competitive positioning is all about the marketing.

One Colorado town turned to birds after discovering that they had three or four species of rare birds among the populace. They took their economic development dollars and began buying ad space in nature and bird watching magazines. It turns out, bird watchers spend a lot of money.

Another characteristic, Luther said, is that successful towns have a **"deliberate transition of power to a younger generation of leaders."**

One town of about 800 in North Dakota, she added, had set up what they called the "bale committee." Each year for the community's annual celebration – the normal marching bands, parades, sidewalk sales routine – the bale committee was in charge of going out to the countryside and getting farmers to donate bales of hay, which would be lined up along Main Street for the parade. After the celebration was over, the bale committee would pick up the bales, then take them back to the farmers they had come from.

Getting picked to be on the bale committee was a big deal.

"It was a stepping stone," Luther said. "They knew that if you got recruited for the bale committee, you were in line to do something bigger and better."

Recruitment for the next generation of leaders is always difficult, she added. But she said the worst way a town can recruit leaders is possibly the most used. She called it "the great lie" – when there's an opening on a committee and a person is told they won't have to do much, other than just come to a couple meetings. It's better, she said, to be honest. Community leadership and committee involvement is more than just attending the monthly meetings; it's learning about the background of an issue, making decisions, attending more meetings to be ready for the monthly meeting, talking to people.

"In healthy small towns, we saw people in leadership positions who knew that part of their job was to recruit new people (to leadership)," she said. ►

But leadership positions aren't the only roles to which successful small towns must recruit their residents. Another characteristic, Luther said, was that the towns have a **"participatory approach to community decision making,"** meaning that the town's residents become aware of and involved with the town's decisions, mostly through town hall meetings.

"This is democracy," Luther said. "It's the feeling that you have an influence, that if you show up, somebody will listen to you."

It can be difficult to persuade residents to come to town hall meetings, she acknowledged. People don't have the time, or may not see how going will make a difference, or how the issues really impact them. But she said small towns across the country are coming up with innovative and creative ways to get residents of all ages and interests to show up to town hall meetings, and that residents who do show up usually become more involved with the town's projects and initiatives.

One town in Indiana, for instance, would have a cookie tasting contest during its town hall meetings. Anybody could bake cookies, come to the meeting, enter them in the contest, or enter their names into a drawing to become a judge in the contest. Five names would be drawn to judge, a winner would be declared, and good cookies could be eaten by all.

Another town coincided its meetings with the first grade folk dancers' performance. "Every grandma in town was there," Luther said.

The way a town hall meeting is conducted is important, too, she said. The most successful town hall meetings she has heard of involve having residents sit at tables of five to six people each, then just asking them to discuss things the town or county should work on in the next two years. The ideas are then given to the meeting's moderators or leader, who goes through the lists and funnels the ideas down to the three to five most popular or beneficial projects; he or she then writes the ideas on flipboards and adds the words "task force". The flipboards are conveniently located near the room's exit, and the attendees sign up for the task force of their interest on the way out. The commissioner's court or town council must follow up with the volunteers, she added, but the approach is usually successful.

In another town, the mayor was known for his Sunday morning brunches. He went to the same café every week at the same time, and those interested in speaking with him could show up too.

Another community, this one in Ohio, had the high school journalism class write up the town's meeting minutes and publish them in the school newspaper. The meetings were more productive than they had been before.

"Adults behave better when kids are around," Luther said.

Getting kids involved in local politics and decision-making is a good idea on many fronts, Luther added. Another characteristic of successful small towns, she said, is that they have **non-traditional people in leadership roles.** That includes women, minorities, and young adults.

"In a small community, you can't afford to waste a resource if you want your town to be successful," Luther said.

Out of all the characteristics discussed during the forum, Luther said she believed two were most important. They were **"willingness to seek help from the outside"** and **"conviction that, in the long run, you have to do it yourself."**

They may seem contradictory, but Luther said seeking help from the outside can help dig many a community out of a thought hole, where leaders don't know how to go about getting funding or finding grants for projects, or are worried about red tape.

She recalled one community that had been given grant funding for job resource training and had actually been talking about giving \$140,000 back to the government because they didn't know how to spend it. With outside help, she said, they were able to gather ideas on the most effective ways to put the money to good use.

Another part of seeking outside help, she said, is in knowing what types of terms and conditions to put into contracts with consultants. Too many communities, she said, "miss the boat" when it comes to taking full advantage of what a consultant can offer, in that they don't require the consultant to train or educate existing staff on how to continue the project, or do the work again, should the need arise. "That's this whole idea of building capacity," Luther said.

Successful towns also have a **"sophisticated use of information resources,"** she said.

Small towns, she added, are often abuzz with information collected by long-time or interested residents and data heads – those who grew up in the community and stayed probably know more about the area than any survey can say. But, they may not know what to do with the information they have, or how to put that information to use.

"In every small town, you find people who are totally over the edge in terms of information. They can never get enough data. They always want more and more," Luther said.

But having information is useless if it's not used. One town in South Dakota, she said, took the time to do a survey with their local extension office. The survey, which Luther described as about two feet thick, sat in the county clerk's office. When Luther asked the clerk what the survey said, the clerk said she didn't know; she only knew that the town had paid for it. When Luther asked the clerk what most surprised her about the survey, the clerk said she was most surprised that they had done it.

"They never made any use of it," Luther said. "The information that is available on small towns now is just tremendous ... but it's the 'so what' that's important."

Other characteristics that became evident during the organization's study included **"an emphasis on quality in business and community life"; having a "cooperative community spirit" and a "strong presence of traditional institutions that are integral to community life" such as such as senior centers, community foundations, and youth activity programs; and showing a "strong belief and support for education" and an "attention to sound and well-maintained infrastructure."**

But in the end, it's the residents and local leaders who must make the changes necessary to make their towns prosper.

"Nobody is going to take care of your town if they don't live there," Luther said.

George O'Reilly, who attended the forum, said there are many ways towns can help themselves.

He cited one town in North Texas that was struggling to get a library painted. His advice to them had been to ask how many banks there were in the town – three. He advised them to get the banks to compete among each other, first by going to the second biggest bank in town and asking them to help purchase the paint, then by going to the largest bank in town and asking them to contribute as well, then going to the smallest bank and asking for whatever is left over. He also advised them to have the senior high school class paint the library. The town followed his advice.

"They got the library painted and it didn't cost them a dime," he said. *