

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AMERICA:
THE POWER TO EXCHANGE CAPITAL RESOURCES
IN NORTON COUNTY, KANSAS

by

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B.S.N., Marymount College, 1984
M.S., Texas Woman's University, 1990

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work
College of Arts and Sciences

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Manhattan, Kansas

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Abstract

Although rural communities have great diversity, each rural community has resources that can be invested to develop community capital resources. Every rural community not only has resources that are held by local community members, each rural community is also embedded in a larger social network that has the power to exchange resources for its own benefit. Therefore, the holders of a rural community's resources also have the power to influence the distribution of these resources. As a way to determine who holds the community's capital resources and begin the community development process, Flora et al. (2006) encouraged rural community development practitioners to perform an assessment of their community's built, financial, political, social, human, cultural, and natural capitals.

The case study method was utilized for the research conducted in this study because of its ability to aid in determining the success or failure of Norton County Economic Development's Downtown Program, which focused on the revitalization of Norton County's downtown areas. It was revealed that many of the Downtown Development programs were successfully implemented because the resources that were controlled by local and outside power structures, which also constituted the dynamic and interactive power structure within that system, were identified, mobilized, and utilized in this rural economic development program. This study contributed to sociological knowledge because it looked at the ability of dynamic and interactive power structures to control capital resources in rural community development. As well, this study extended the literature on the importance of participation, solidarity, and the exchange of resources in rural community development, and added to the research on the use of community capitals in identifying and utilizing capital resources in planning rural community development programs that are successful.

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Dedication

“I thank our Lord that I now gather such sweet fruit from the bitter sowing of those studies.” St. Jerome, Patron of Students, 347-420 AD

This dissertation is dedicated to mom, Lola May Woods Smith, my grandmother who at the age of 99 still knew exactly what my “paper” was all about.

CHAPTER 1 - Introduction

We have a tendency to view the community¹ as a natural unit of collective action, the natural and healthy state of humankind where the principles of solidarity and participation are pursued. As early as the Greek polis, the culture of the community was regarded as participatory; therefore, Plant (1974) suggested that the polis was a form of social interaction and political organization that encompassed more than locality. Around 800 BC, as trade began to increase within common territories, Greek marketplaces grew into communities that required defensive fortifications. These independent city-states, or polis, controlled a limited amount of territory surrounding the polis and most had the characteristic of being small in size. Although the polis often had unstable forms of government, the Greeks still upheld a fundamental sense of community, in that they maintained their sense of kinship relationships within the locality of each polis (Hooker, 1996).

Within the locality of the early rural, agrarian European village, religion, politics, and kinship were all intertwined. Tönnies (1957 [1887]) perception of this intimate community, or *Gemeinschaft*, formed the underlying ideal of social cohesion, which governed individual behavior and the social relationships found within a social group, such as the community. Tönnies (1957 [1887]); however, lamented the loss of *Gemeinschaft* in the emerging industrial world, where society, or *Gesellschaft*, became the ideal of social cohesion. With the development of industrialization, Tönnies (1957 [1887]) felt that social relationships were being governed by self-interest and competition, and that the basis of interaction had become solely economic. As well, with the transition from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, the community was disappearing and its members were becoming isolated.

¹ Community has multiple meanings; however, for this study it will be defined as the locality within Norton County that is maintained as a place where its members live their daily lives in the bonds of identity and solidarity with a group of kindred rural folk who participate in the common good that transcends individual interest.

Tönnies (1905: 574) proposed that by developing a new *Gemeinschaft*, the community would embody the best of the old, yet would be ideal for the future, if the idea of this was “present somehow in the minds of the people who feel or know themselves as belonging to it.” Although Durkheim believed that *Gesellschaft* societies were no less natural than *Gemeinschaft* communities, he accepted Tönnies’ analysis that “*Gemeinschaft* is the community” (Aldous et al., 1972: 1193), an aggregate of those who have strongly cohesive minds that remain linked in spite of their distinctions. *Gemeinschaft* is also a community of memories, a necessary consequence of common existence that gives rise to economic, religious, or political associations that can still be found in the community, as long as it does not surpass certain dimensions (Aldous et al., 1972).

Although rural communities are limited in dimension, rural areas have vast dimensions. The U.S. Census Bureau (USDA, 2004) defines rural areas as open country and settlements with fewer than 2,500 residents; and according to their definition, all territory located outside of urbanized areas and urban clusters is considered rural. Rural areas not only have vast dimensions, they also have vast diversity. Whitener and McGranahan (2003) report that at the beginning of the 21st century, rural America comprised 80% of America’s territory in 2,305 counties and was home to 56 million people. As well, no one race or ethnic group, terrain or climate, business or institution dominated rural areas.

Wilkinson (1999) insisted that understanding rural as a territorial concept is important in the study of rural life and the community, in that the arrangement of people and their activities within a local territorial base is essential in understanding the interaction between the community as a territorial element and all other essential elements of the community. Community, which Hiller (1941) referred to as the territorial location of people and their activities, has a distinctive life history that not only serves as a basis for the reciprocations between local people, and between localities, but also provides for the integration of all other elements that constitute the community. Community, as a territory, therefore becomes a possession of the locality² with which one is identified.

² Locality for this study will incorporate the definition by Wilkinson (1999) and will be expressed as the lateral or geographic dimension of Norton, where people meet their daily needs and where adequate social contacts sustain an interactional community.

The rural area where people meet their daily needs together is locality, which Wilkinson (1999: 53) stated “is the spatial manifestation of a fundamental organization of interdependencies among people.” The community, as a possession of the locality, is defined by the traditional view as an outlying area of diffuse settlement and a more compact central area where people tend to meet their daily needs (Galpin, 1915). The more contemporary view defines the community as a place where people not only meet their daily needs, but also improve their lives by acting together to solve common problems and adapt to change within the comprehensive interactional structure of the community (Wilkinson, 1999).

Even early writers implied that the community must somehow be distinguished from other areas in order to be deserving of the name community. MacIver (1917: 9-10) described the early 1900s community as “any circle of people who live together, who belong together, so that they share, not this or that particular interest, but a whole set of interests wide enough and complete enough to include their lives.” Twenty-five years later, the connotations of the community varied widely and the basic social processes operated in quite a different manner than that of the past; however, Smith (1941) agreed that the community was not only a body of people that lived in a definite geographic area, the community also referred to qualities of togetherness, mutuality, and solidarity.

Community solidarity often accompanies economic growth and development, and although one may cause another, other factors must also be considered as playing a key role in the process. Berkowitz (1996: 454) claimed that not only community growth, but as important, personal growth can be achieved by promoting a sense of community solidarity and pride, which helps to meet the “deeper needs of the community”. As well, McClenaghan (2000) finds that community solidarity is enhanced when communities incorporate new strategies into their community development practices. These practices emphasize participation into resolving problems associated with rural decline, social exclusion, housing decay, and environmental degradation.

“Conscious participation of the population in the development of their own community and readiness to share responsibility are essential if that transformation is to take place” (Hendriks, 1972: 76). Development of the community, rather than development in the community, not only increases the willingness of its members to participate in community development, it also enhances the lives of its members and increases their capacity to take the

action needed to improve their community (Kaufman, 1959; Summers, 1986; Korsching and Allen, 2004). However, Summers (1986) pointed out that development in the community, such as the creation of jobs, economic growth, and improved social services, may produce development of the community through the efficient use and maintenance of productive resources.

All resources³ must be examined when planning programs for rural community development. Flora et al. (1997) indicated that when the community, which is embedded in larger social networks, can work cooperatively within them is more likely to have successful economic development. Darling, Rahman, and Pillarisetti (1994) stressed that when local resources are combined with outside resources in order to bring a new vitality into the community, the focus for rural community development becomes the revitalization of the community's quality of life. Also, when the focus of community development goes beyond economic growth and technological improvement to include social development, which Littrell and Hobbs (1989: 54) referred to as the "development of people themselves," community members gain both a feeling of belonging and the resources that are needed to benefit not only the community members themselves, but the rural community, as well.

In order to effectively utilize the community's resources, rural community development practitioners (RCDPs)⁴ must be familiar with the dynamic and interactive patterns of their community's power structures. Early researchers of community studies found that power structures varied according to the community and the variables that were being studied. Rossi (1960: 390) noted that the contribution of case study after case study on the characteristics of the community's power structures could best be characterized as "it is different here than elsewhere." In the tradition of the American community studies, other researchers confirmed

³ Resources can be essential for survival or can be used for satisfying wants. Resources help to produce goods, can be used to provide services, and may generate new resources. For this study, resources will be defined as all things in Norton, which are either renewable or non-renewable and have value attached to them.

⁴ For this study, the definition of Rural Community Development Practitioners (RCDPs) will be the people within Norton that practice community development through hands-on projects, education, leadership development and networking, and may strive toward developing rural housing, infrastructure, or economic development projects. RCDPs may have or may be working toward a certificate, bachelor's degree, master's degree, or Ph.D. in rural community development.

that power structures varied depending on the size of the community or its geographical region, its ethnic or cultural patterns, its political groups or civic institutions, or the historical shifts in its power structures (Lynd and Lynd, 1937; Hunter, 1953; Schulze, 1958; Vidich and Bensman, 1959; Rossi, 1960).

The community's power structures are not a static phenomenon; therefore, the distribution of resources not only varies from one community to the next, but also varies according to transformations in the community's values, and in changes that occur over time. Rogers (1974) suggested that resources, which can increase the ability of the community's power holders to influence a person or group, can include information, social status, political office, committee membership, wealth, land ownership, flexible work schedules, friends and acquaintances, knowledge and expertise. "At any given point or period of time the distribution of resources in a social system constitutes the power structure of that system" (Rogers, 1974: 1429).

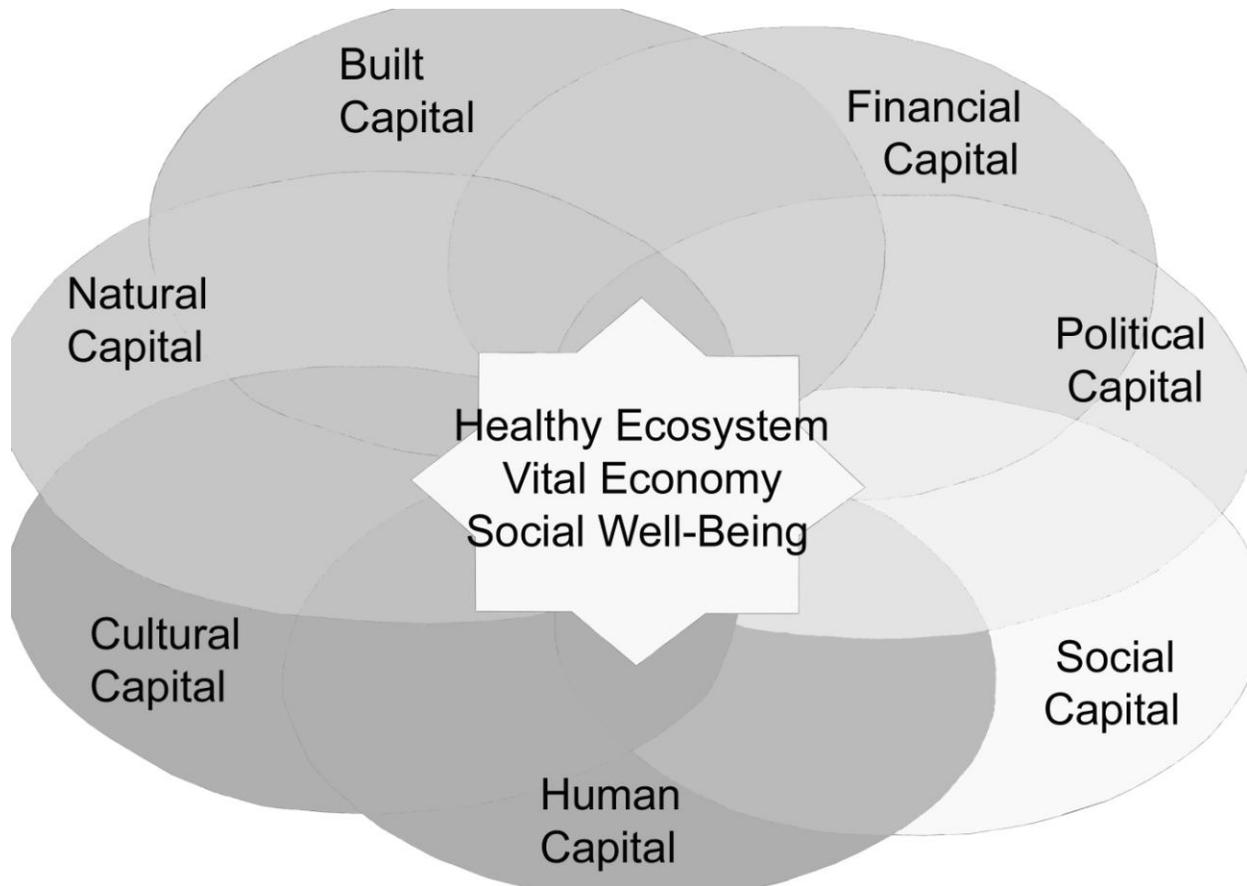
Understanding the community's dynamic and interactive power structures allows the community to mobilize the resources held by local community members, as well as outside agencies. Every rural community has resources and when the community's resources are invested, capital⁵ can be created (Flora and Flora, 2008). Resources can be transformed from one form of capital to another, and as one capital increases, other capitals increase more readily. However, capital can become "decapitalized" when one type of capital is emphasized over all other capitals, which as a result, can compromise the community's economy, environment, or social equity (Flora and Flora, 2008: 17). Flora's Community Capitals Framework (CCF)⁶

⁵ Capital has various meanings, but for this study it will be defined as the resources or assets that create capital, which take time to accumulate and reproduce, in either the form of an identical capital or in a capital that transforms from one form of capital to another when it is invested or reinvested. Capital is also the principal measuring tool of the community's health, which is used to determine the effectiveness of community development actions that affect productivity and contribute to the autonomy of Norton.

⁶ Community Capitals Framework, which is defined by the model as built, financial, political, social, human, cultural, and natural capital, interact with each other and build upon each other to produce additional resources. Flora et al. (2006) found that using Community Capitals as a framework for rural community development programs assist community development practitioners in not only determining the interaction among capitals and how they build upon each other, but also in measuring the change and understanding the impact that results from the investment into the community's capitals.

provides a visualization of the overlapping boundaries of the community's capital resources (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 Community Capitals Framework



SOURCE: Fey, Bregendahl, and Flora. 2006. "The Measurement of Community Capitals Through Research." *Online Journal of Rural Research & Policy*. 1: 1-18. <www.ojrrp.org>

Fey, Bregendahl, and Flora (2006) propose that there have been many attempts to understand how the community defines their capital resources and how to effectively measure capital that has been invested in the community. Several of the efforts to measure capital by Flora and colleagues (Flora et al., 1997; Flora et al., 2004; Emery and Flora, 2006; Fey, Bregendahl, and Flora, 2006) have included determining through logistic regression if communities with high entrepreneurial social capital have greater success in implementing community development efforts, examining ways that rural communities use external financial investments to build capital and well-being, investigating the impact of the flow of capitals on the community's capacity to initiate and sustain change, and focusing on the use of outcomes to

develop practical ways to measure community capitals in local community development efforts. Nevertheless, “even with research dedicated to the community capitals, measuring the capitals and investments therein, it is still a gray area” (Fey, Bregendahl, and Flora, 2006: 2).

It is intended that this dissertation will contribute to and extend the knowledge base on the sociological aspects of rural community development by drawing on the resources of the community capitals model. Therefore, this researcher has included the following works, which contribute to the foundation of this dissertation and are partially noted here as, sociology of the community pioneered by Tönnies, 1957 [1887] and continued by Park, 1936; Smith, 1941; Kaufman, 1959; Warren, 1978; Flora and Flora, 1988; Wilkinson, 1999; and Flora, Bregendahl, Chen, and Friel, 2004; the work on solidarity by Durkheim, 1964 [1933]; Goffman, 1956; and Parsons, 1963; the writings on participation by Young and Larson, 1965; Pateman, 1970; Verba and Nie, 1972; Wright, 1976; and Fraser, 2005; the research on community and rural community development by Zorbaugh, 1926; Summers, 1986; John, Batie, and Norris, 1988; Castle, 1993; Darling, Rahman, and Pillarisetti, 1994; Bhattacharyya, 2004; and the studies on capital authored by Bourdieu, 1986 and studied by Schulze, 1961; Becker, 1962; Coleman, 1988; Bates, 1990; Putnam, 1994; Woolcock, 1998; and Flora, Flora, and Fey, 2004.

Nevertheless, many RCDPs are not familiar with the fore mentioned research, nor are they familiar with the research of Flora and colleagues on community capitals. Therefore, it is this researcher’s contention that many RCDPs have not identified the holders of their community’s capital resources, thus they have not mobilized these capitals prior to implementing their community development programs. Consequently, the first step needed for successful rural community development has not occurred. It is the premise of this dissertation that local community members and outside agencies that hold and thus control or have greater access to the rural community’s capital resources, and thereby constitute the power structure of the community, must be identified prior to planning and implementing rural community development programs. It is only when the holders of the community’s capital resources have been identified that RCDPs will be able to mobilize these capitals so that they will become community capitals; and as a result, will contribute to the success of the rural community’s development programs.

It is the assumption of this researcher that every rural community has resources, no matter how small or isolated the community is, and that these resources can be invested to

become capital. It is also the assumption of this researcher that the capital resources that one rural community has will not be the same capital resources found in similar communities. As well, the capital resources the rural community has will change over time; however, this change may occur over years, or depending on providential or catastrophic events may change in only a matter of hours. It is the assumption of this researcher that the efficient use of the rural community's capital resources can promote community development, enhance the lives of community members, build solidarity, and increase the capacity for community members to participate in their rural community's development programs. However, it is also the assumption of this researcher that if the holders of the rural community's capital resources are not identified prior to the implementation of the community's development programs, the community will not be able to effectively mobilize their community's capital; and subsequently, their rural community development programs may be difficult to implement or may not be successful.

Based on the above assumptions, the goal of this dissertation was to assess the outcome of the Norton County Economic Development (NCED) Downtown Development program, which is a part of the NCED Strategic Plan for community and economic development in the community of Norton, Kansas. The objectives of this dissertation were to identify the local community members and outside agencies that hold the built, financial, political, social, human, cultural, and natural capital resources needed to successfully implement the NCED Downtown Development program in the community of Norton, Kansas; to establish if the capital resources needed to successfully implement the NCED Downtown Development program in the community of Norton, Kansas were utilized in the implementation of this community development program; and to determine if the local community members and outside agencies that hold the capital resources also constituted the dynamic and interactive power structure within that system.

This dissertation, which will study the implementation and outcome of the NCED Downtown Development program in the community of Norton, Kansas, contains a Literature Review that describes the rural community and the significance of resources in meeting the needs of the locality, and explains the importance of participation in decision-making processes. The Literature Review also defines the value of solidarity within the rural community and how solidarity can be affected by the power structures that hold the rural community's capital resources, and how these capital resources can generate rural community development. This

dissertation contains a chapter which reviews Community Capitals and why they are vital in planning successful rural community development programs.

The chapter on Methods and Measurements centers on the case study method and its practical application of analysis for this dissertation. A chapter is included on Norton County, Kansas that portrays its early history and how the ethics, attitude, and determination of its first settlers continues today to characterize who the people are of Norton County. This chapter also describes the Downtown Development program in the community of Norton, Kansas, the evolution of the NCED Board, and a selection of the rural community development programs that have been planned and implemented by the NCED. Research Findings is the chapter that focuses on the rich data procured from the research relevant to the implementation and outcome of the NCED Downtown Development program in Norton County, Kansas. The chapter on Research Findings abundantly details the findings of the Storefront Renewal Project, the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, the Leadership Norton County program, the Entrepreneurship Program, the Downtown Restoration Committee, the Historic District Designation, and Energy Efficiency Program. Discussion and Conclusions complete this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2 - Perspectives on Rural Community Development

The Rural Community

Very often, people think of themselves as being one with their community. Tönnies (1905) presented the idea that people are not only perceived of as being inhabitants of their dwelling place, but are also recognized as being identical with their common habitation, whether it be their building, polis, or community. Although not one direct descendant may remain of those that occupied place in the past, Tönnies (1905) believed that the community has a unity that persists through change, and which endures and perpetuates itself by the transmission of its reality from generation to generation. Therefore, the rural community's resources must be identified and mobilized, so that there will continue to be many more generations of communities in rural America.

Distinguishing the inherent differences between what a community is compared to that which defines the rural community has been widely studied. Researchers (Deavers, 1992; Radin et al., 1996) characterized rural communities by their small scale and their low-density development, in which their physical distance and remoteness due to geographic barriers contributed to specialization in their economies, as well as social and cultural isolation. Therefore, they tended to surmise that rural communities are somewhat peripheral to the rest of society. Despite the challenges many rural communities are facing, these researchers also agreed that there is great diversity, innovativeness, and variation that have allowed many rural communities to overcome their remoteness.

Although they were typically remote, Midwestern rural communities were often described as the complete territorial community by early researchers. Some of these researchers (Lynd and Lynd, 1929; Moe and Taylor, 1942) continued to expand on the idea that despite its remoteness, the rural community was one where all residence, production, and consumption activities took place. However, because settlement of the Midwest occurred during conditions of labor scarcity, Flora and Flora (1991) argued that Midwestern rural communities emerged or declined in response to droughts or bumper crops, the shift in modes of transportation, and through various macroeconomic changes. As well, technical and mechanical changes in

agriculture, consolidation of schools and services, and the deregulation of banking and transportation continued to weaken the rural community.

The rural community has often been defined as a sparsely populated area that was the basis of a sustenance organization, and was characterized by adherence to traditional norms and conservative values. However, Wilkinson (1999) stressed that the rural community, as with any community, requires a definition of locality where daily needs can be met and where adequate social contacts can sustain an interactional community. Although the benefits of living in a rural community diminishes with the dispersion of the local population, thereby increasing the barriers to community interaction and social well-being, there are those that believe the rural community can prosper if there is relatively little interference in *Gemeinschaft*.

Not only does *Gemeinschaft* imply shared enjoyments and possessions, commonality and friends, as well as common enemies, Tönnies (1957 [1887]) declared that above all, it signified an ethical concern for all members of the community. *Gemeinschaft* is real and organic with strong connections that are deeply rooted and bonded to the land. While Tönnies embodied the traditional, orderly, and rooted view of the community that is connected to small localities, Wilkinson (1999) asserted that the most important consideration in studying life in the rural community should focus not only on locality, but also on the interaction between locality, its members, and the institutions that comprise all other essential elements of the community.

Although the concept of community has often been described by researchers (Hillery, 1955; Lewis and Lyon, 1986; Castle, 1993; Radin et al., 1996; Flora, Flora, and Fey, 2004) as a sense of place with shared values, beliefs, and goals, involving the interactions between its members, its institutions, and the environment, locality has not changed as much as the social organization of rural communities. People once lived, worked, shopped, socialized, and worshipped all in one community that depended on one single resource to provide its economic base. However, the rural community has changed over time, so that there is not only great diversity in today's rural communities, the rural communities of today also differ more among themselves than urban communities.

Just as rural communities differ in their size and density, they also differ from one community to the next in the type of bonds or social interactions that are formed (Hunter, 1978; Fischer, 1982; Goudy, 1990). It has also been found that socioeconomic factors and age influence the degree that people become involved in the rural community's organizational

memberships. As well, the strength of the rural community lies not only in the attachment that its members share with other community members, but also in the length of time that its members have spent in building friendships and in strengthening family ties (Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974; Goudy, 1977; Goudy, 1982; Goudy, 1990).

Although strong familial ties may occasionally conflict with those of the locality, Goudy (1990) felt that strong friendships with those residing outside the locality do not necessarily damage the rural community because they can produce ties that tap into resources within the larger society. Wilkinson (1999); however, warned that if the interaction between relatives and neighbors who are strongly tied to one another become disproportionately intimate, this network of social relationships can replace the locality that should normally provide a complete and integrated network for community relations. This often occurs whenever sufficient resources or services are not available in the rural community, thereby causing its members to look outside the locality in order to meet their primary needs.

The rural community depends on formal structures, such as social agencies and the municipal government to meet the needs of its members and perform its locality-relevant tasks more effectively. However, Warren (1978) cautioned that the spatial dispersion in rural areas not only affects the ability of the rural community to maintain its members' social relationships, it also determines the capability of the rural community to shape its future. Therefore, employment opportunities, as well as access to various institutional services and locality-relevant institutions, such as schools, churches, and shopping facilities, will continue to be important resources toward the survival of the rural community.

Every community has resources that can be transformed into other resources, and one resource the community has is its members. Each member within the community is connected to other people, who in turn are connected to and interact with more people. As the network of interpersonal relationships within the rural community grows, so also the attachment toward the community (Ellsworth, 1989; Goudy, 1990). Gerson, Stueve, and Fischer (1977: 156) stated "attachment to place is not holistic but multidimensional. There are different ways of being attached...and different types of people are attached in different ways." Therefore, once RCDPs identify the resources held by people that are attached to the community, these resources can be mobilized for the community's development programs. These resources that better the

community and the lives of its community members become the foundation for participation and solidarity in the rural community.

Participation

According to Bhattacharyya (2004), participation⁷ is inclusion. Inclusion not only means taking part in endorsing decisions and the processes of defining the problems that need to be solved, but also in deciding the agenda for debate and decision, and how to solve the community's problems. In order for rural community members to reaffirm their solidarity, they must have the opportunity to own their community's problems by feeling and defining them, and they must be able to make use of their knowledge and mobilize the resources that they have for solving these problems. Resources are the determinants of whether the community succeeds or fails in its goal to secure solidarity, and the largest resource the community can mobilize is not only its community members, but as importantly, their participation.

While some studies (Olson, 1965; Molm, 1994; Molm, 1997) showed that coercion or material incentives are used to acquire and maintain active participation by its members, others (Turner, 1979; Jenkins, 1983; Fine and Harrington, 2004) contended that the collective incentives of identity, sociability, moral purpose, and civic engagement, along with a sense of commitment, solidarity, and participation attract members, regardless of material incentives. Those who value material incentives stress physical sustenance and safety; however, in societies where the basic physical needs of its members have been assured, the issues of economic, social, and military security are superseded by human rights, equality, self-actualization, and participation. Thus, the ideas of older social movements, such as the 18th century ideals of liberal-humanitarians and 19th century principles of equality and justice are not rejected, but instead are incorporated into the community, so as to build on and develop identity, solidarity, and participation (Inglehart, 1981; Mason, 1989).

There are those who believe that the community grows out of participation. At the same time, community makes participation possible, which helps to foster self-actualization and social well-being. Participation increases community identification and social well-being when its

⁷ Participation will be defined for this study as the direct, indirect, formal, or informal behaviors, activities or responsibilities that consist of taking part in or contributing to any stage of the decision-making process, which can foster solidarity and facilitate growth in Norton.

natural groups represent the community as a whole and are oriented toward community values, services, and activities (Mulder, 1971; Verba and Nie, 1972; Wilkinson, 1979; Barber, 1984; Fine and Harrington, 2004). However, Young and Larson (1965) warned that if the scope of the group is more narrow, then increased participation may accentuate differences. Although the community must learn how to capture and channel differences in perspectives and interests so that these groups are given a voice, some researchers insisted that participation of diverse voices can facilitate action or change in the community (Mathie and Green, 1997; Cousins and Whitmore, 1998; deLancer Julnes, 2001).

In order to facilitate change in the community, community members must know what purpose community participation has and what forms of communication are being used. As well, participation has to be perceived as making a difference if it is to be practiced (Friedrich, 1974[1950]; Littrell and Hobbs, 1989; Fine and Harrington, 2004; Fraser, 2005). Consultants and stakeholders may use participation as a means to recruit community members with ideas similar to theirs or may use participation as a way to get others to ratify the activities and viewpoints of experts. Although well-established community groups or prominent members of the community may also use participation to dominate or exclude others, Fraser (2005) proposes that those who practice participation often do so to secure resources, maintain social order, and empower members of the community to be a part of the decision-making process.

Passive members can also participate in the decision-making process by exerting a degree of influence over other members through their presence, as well as through their facial expressions and body language. However slight it may be, Wright (1976: 227) declared that the degree of influence exerted by a person's "mere presence" in a group or within the community constitutes participation. Although participation can be as minimal as sitting through a meeting or listening to a discussion, passive members derive the benefits of participation through integration and insight from the discussion and decision-making process of its active members. Even when people do not have ultimate authority or responsibility in the decision-making process, the forwarding of the discussion to others or the offering of indirect participation through intermediaries constitute valid forms of participation (Pateman, 1970; Wright, 1976).

Although participation need not involve any commonality of goals and can be associated with hostility, indifference, or contempt, the value of participation lies in mitigating these attitudes (Pateman, 1970; Wright, 1976). Participation involves no assumptions about the

participants' attitudes other than a willingness to participate; nevertheless, participation in any activity that changes knowledge has profound implications for motivation (Hickey, 2003). Littrell and Hobbs (1989: 63) revealed that people tend to be motivated to support what they have helped to create; however, these researchers also stated "if people have not had an opportunity to have a role in defining an issue, they will have a higher probability of nonsupport and may even oppose what has been developed."

Although people participate in community and organizational processes for a variety of reasons, in a variety of ways, and to varying degrees, the more people participate, the more responsibility they have for controlling community and organizational outcomes. However, while people may desire to have more influence in an organization's decision-making process and may support the organization's programs, the opportunity to participate may be as important as the actual act of participation. Therefore, while community members may support the broad goals of an organization, such as the community's development board, they may on a personal level not have a desire to broaden their own power (Gouldner, 1960; Tannenbaum, 1961; Strauss, 1963; Styskal, 1980).

As with any socially significant phenomena, power is relative to specific social systems; therefore, any change in a person's social role may alter the amount of power at their disposal. "Power broadly involves the ability to affect the behavior of other persons" (Rogers, 1974: 1424); however, this does not mean that the person will exercise their abilities, as ability does not imply action. People estimate one another's abilities, and subsequently adjust their actions based on these real or perceived estimations. Through the process of determining estimations, the estimate of person's objective ability may be augmented to include the person's reputed ability. Rogers (1974) also reasoned that if power is defined with reference to ability, then ability rests on holding resources that are necessary to influence another person or group of people, which can include time, energy, charisma, access to mass media, access to influential people, and access to potential participants.

A problem of many RCDPs is how to make participation a reality. Participation reduces power differences by encouraging decision-making by the less powerful (Mulder, 1971). Although those who actively participate in an organization have more information and expertise pertaining to the organization's workings because of specialized training and time invested, participation provides the more powerful with an opportunity to positively communicate with

and effectively influence the less powerful. However, Mulder (1971: 36) reported that in order for participation to be effective, all members must have the “preconditions of motivation and expertness necessary for real participation and decision-making.” Participation can be regarded as a learning process, but without the necessary preconditions, participants may be asked to engage in matters that are above their level of expertise or that are without substance, which as a result, may contribute to their being less likely to engage in similar activities (Mulder, 1971).

If participation is not effective, Mulder (1971) advised that participant contribution and self-realization will be limited and effective decision-making will not occur. Decision-makers involved in rural community development must provide the overall direction for accomplishing the goals and objectives of the community, and must take into account the resources that are available to successfully complete this process (Erickson, 1996). Decision-makers are also responsible for creating channels of communication. Although not all community members desire active participation in their community’s processes, they do require accurate information concerning their community, their community’s plans for development, and the outcomes of community development programs that have been implemented.

Drewes (2001: 314) proclaims that “participation is the cornerstone of a healthy community.” Participation that is effective not only promotes decision-making, it also supports the development of new structures for leadership and communication. Through the process of participation, Wright (1976) claimed that commonalities among participants are recognized, thus there is a need for community members with differing interests to come together in common to participate in the decision-making processes of their community. Participation in the community’s decision-making processes not only serves “as a means toward realizing the goal (and means) described as community” (Wright, 1976: 234), participation also motivates and empowers community members, fosters rural community development, and reaffirms solidarity.

Solidarity

The shared interactions between people and the interactions within the complex network of interests, institutions, and locality become a network of interpersonal relationships that builds

resources and serves as the foundation for solidarity.⁸ By understanding community as solidarity, any social configuration that shares identity and norms becomes a community that is freed of incidental baggage, such as ethnicity, territoriality, or level of industrialization (Bhattacharyya, 2004). Industrialization defined a new ideology that optimized people for their market value and regarded solidarity as a dysfunctional externality that hindered utility-optimizing behavior. The community where most of its social activities had once occurred within its confines, among its members who shared a common culture, was transformed into a place of unfamiliar people in unknown places with abstract institutions (McClelland, 1961; Foster, 1973; Kemper and Collins, 1990).

Nevertheless, the change in society brought about by the rising scale of industrialization was viewed by many as a planned economy that regarded productivity as a means of promoting social well-being. In order to explain a development that was inevitable, Saint-Simon (1952 [1819]) implied that the sole aim of any exertion should be towards the kind of organization most favorable to industry. Although Comte (1968 [1851]) agreed that society would be transformed because of industrial progress, he warned that social fragmentation was also an unavoidable consequence of industrialization, in that productivity in an industrial system created competition as well as cooperation, division as well as solidarity. However, according to Comte (1974 [1839]), a fuller development of individual diversity extended and deepened solidarity by spontaneously inspiring in each person a sense of close dependence toward all others.

Although he had no illusions about the tendencies of the modern industrial society, Durkheim stated, “the greatest good is in communion with others” (1953 [1924]: 37). Durkheim (1964 [1933]) also contended that wherever there is society there is altruism because there is solidarity; however, in order for solidarity to exist, it must be contained in the physical and psychic constitution of each person. Since people and society are interdependent, neither can exist without the other. Society exerts a moderating influence over its members and tempers its actions, but it is not enough that society take in a great many people, people must also act and react to one another.

⁸ Solidarity is used to represent identity or depict unity; however, for this study it will also be used to describe the mutual interlocking, coherent, and unified patterns of behavior that create interpersonal relationships, identity, and participation within the membership of the community of Norton.

Interactions and mutual influence among people are attempts to constitute a sense of “we” in society; therefore, Parsons (1963:51) claimed that “being one of us” is a factor that enhances influence. Common beliefs and sentiments form the basis of solidarity, thus the sense that its members have opinions and attitudes in common is a necessary condition of any stable group of people that comprise society. Parsons (1963) commented; however, that it is not only the virtue that their members stand together, it is also necessary that any group of people that are subject to mutual influence establish a common bond of solidarity among its members.

The sacredness of the self strengthens solidarity among one another through everyday encounters, which in doing so sustains interlocking relationships and maintains solidarity in society (Goffman, 1956). The rules of conduct that bind as few as two people together are the bindings of society. People seek out others, and as a result interact with one another through direct or indirect types of interpersonal relationships, which are personalized mutual obligations of trust, and are associated with respect, help, and forgiveness. These interpersonal relationships influence the structure of solidarity and are sustained by the existence of lasting relationships between self-interested members within a friendship, neighborhood, or community (Triandis, 1972; Posner, 1980; Ellsworth and Shapiro, 1989).

Solidarity is often identified as membership in a unified community that is considered traditional, ordinary, and normal. However, the uniqueness of each member and the influences of a diversified society can also be incorporated into the community (Bittner, 1963; Young, 1970). The stability of the community is influenced by the degree of its solidarity when considering the interposing effects that a complex society has upon it. When these influences are incorporated into the community, Young (1970) declared that these innovations are a basis of focus, diversity, and inclusiveness that not only contribute to community change, but also strengthen community solidarity.

The bonds of solidarity develop not only between people, but between people and the community they belong to. People vary in how they fit into the community; some interact more intimately with one another and others are at the periphery. These steady or shifting interactions provide both the stability and dynamics in a social structure, and are deeply tied to issues of status and power. The dimension of status consists of voluntary and unforced interactions that occur as a result of freely receiving accorded resources from others. The bonds of solidarity, which occur as a result of this indirect exchange of resources, can produce feelings of

satisfaction and well-being, and has the tendency to produce more such outcomes. When mutual exchanges of status are extended into the community, they tend to sustain organizational alliances between members who share a common culture. However, both status and power are relational, thus the real, anticipated, or imagined outcomes resulting from these exchanges can have a multiplier effect on human emotions (Kemper, 1987; Kemper and Collins, 1990).

Numerous studies have focused on direct types of exchange and how they affect the development of solidarity, which has been defined as “the integrative bonds that develop between persons, and between persons and the social units to which they belong” (Molm, Collett, and Schaefer, 2007: 207). The direct type of exchange is based on relations of reciprocity that evolve gradually without the negotiation of resources or the knowledge of when a reciprocal act of resources will occur, thereby making it difficult to determine outcomes. The direct type of exchange also occurs when people negotiate for resources with agreements that benefit one another and are strictly binding, which in itself can create conflict. Because those involved in the exchange can have equal or unequal power relative to one another, a direct exchange can produce equal or unequal benefits as a result of the exchange (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964; Cook and Emerson, 1978; Emerson, 1981; Markovsky, Willer, and Patton, 1988; Molm, 2003).

Even when a direct exchange occurs within larger networks, the alternative partners within these networks, which can affect the relative power or can produce exchanges with unequal resources, are shown not to make the reciprocal exchange riskier. This is attributed to the degree of risk that occurs within the exchange. Risk affects the development of trust, which as a feature of social capital, facilitates coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Trust is one of the key components of solidarity; therefore, when people demonstrate their trustworthiness within situations of risk and make transactions that give equal power to all parties, trust as well as solidarity significantly increase (Macneil, 1986; Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1993; Kollock, 1994; Molm, 1994; Yamagishi and Yamagishi, 1994; Molm, Takahashi, and Peterson, 2000; Molm, Collett, and Schaefer, 2007).

Power relations determine crucial differences in everyday life; however, if solidarity is centered elsewhere and power is exercised when it is not entirely legitimated, opposition is produced (Collins, 1975). The potential of people, which have the power to make decisions or take action, are determinative for the existence of others. Thus, the holders of resources that

occupy certain social roles within specific social systems have the ability to utilize these resources to influence others to act according to their preferences (Schulze, 1961; Rogers, 1974). Therefore, in order to strengthen the community's solidarity and generate trust in the community's development programs, RCDPs must effectively mobilize the community's resources and must be familiar with the dynamic and interactive patterns of the community's power structures.

Power and Resources

Appreciating the concept of power⁹ is fundamental in understanding community interactions. According to Hunter (1953: 2), power is a “necessary function in the community, for it involves decision-making and it also involves the function of executing determined policies.” Hunter (1953) viewed power structures as being rooted in a small group of elites, in which self-interested policy decisions were made by overlapping cliques of downtown business leaders, local government officials, and members of civic and voluntary organizations. This informal power structure was able to override the more formal structure of economic and government authorities because of their response to community-wide issues. “New times bring new problems, and decisions have to be made concerning changed conditions;” nevertheless, while policies had to be made effective, Hunter (1953: 10) reported that the control of setting policy was made in response to social change.

Although there is no guarantee that the correct policy will be selected, or that it will continue to be appropriate over time, Young and Lyson (1993) proclaimed that the community's problem-solving organization can never rest. Problem-solving capacity acts as a buffer between the economic environment and local well-being. As the interests of business owners and the general population intersect, and when they have similar views on community-wide issues, a healthy civic environment also emerges that is not limited only to the community's economic realm (Blanchard and Matthews, 2006). Although pre-existing conditions, such as formal role obligations, sociodemographic characteristics, and the distribution of resources frame the

⁹ Power has various definitions; however, for this study it will be defined as the ability of a person or group of people in Norton, which hold various resources, to either influence a change in another person's or group's behavior or increase the probability that they will behave in a manner compatible with the preferences of the person or group in power.

definition of the encounter and act as direct structural constraints, researchers (Lawler, Ridgeway, and Markovsky 1993; Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin, 1994; Ridgeway, 2006) found that they can also directly shape behavior in a manner that adjusts and adapts the interpretation of the encounter; which as a result, can produce a shared definition of the exchange.

Emerson (1972a, 1972b) proposed that the power one has over another in an exchange relation is inversely related to their dependence on the other partner in the exchange, and is a joint function of the value of the resource that is desired and the availability of which the particular resource can be obtained from alternative sources. In an exchange network that consists only of positive connections, each participant involved in the exchange can only acquire the desired resource from one other partner (Yamagishi, Gillmore, and Cook, 1988). Thus, the relative value of the resource is the only source of power, and since there are no alternative sources of the resource, the relative scarcity of the resource that is controlled by the exchange partner determines the relative power of each participant.

Although the relative scarcity of the resource in networks of positive connections determines the distribution of power, the relative scarcity of the resource is determined by both the supply of resources available in the network and by the distance involved in gaining access to the source of resources (Yamagishi, Gillmore, and Cook, 1988). Competition for resources is not an inherent characteristic in networks of positive connections because only one partner facilitates the exchange. However, in negatively connected networks, competition occurs between participants who desire resources that are controlled by other participants. Mixed networks are more common than networks with positive or negative connections because participants often have access to alternative sources of the same resource, which frequently come from other exchange relations within the participant's network (Yamagishi, Gillmore, and Cook, 1988).

The control of resources, and thus the distribution of power, can be predicted on the basis of the structural characteristics of exchange networks. Thus, power is fundamentally a social structural phenomenon (Cook and Emerson, 1978). Yamagishi, Gillmore, and Cook (1988) commented that exchanges are linked together in a manner that events, which occur in one location of the network, have predictable consequences for events that occur in other locations of the network. Furthermore, various researchers submitted that rather than acquiring resources from properties of the participants in the exchange, power is the ability to acquire resources from

patterns of social interactions (Emerson, 1972a, 1972b; Willer and Anderson, 1981; Thye, Lovaglia, and Markovsky, 1997).

“The substance of community is social interaction” (Wilkinson, 1991: 11). Social interaction is the source of community identity, which Wilkinson (1991) claimed delineates territory as the community’s locality, provides the associations that comprise local society, and gives direction and structure to the processes of collective action. The format for directing or converting social capital into organizational forms that encourage collective action was termed entrepreneurial social infrastructure (ESI) by Flora et al. (1997). As with social infrastructure, the community with ESI is able to mobilize resources from both within and outside the community, and has the ability to develop broadly based networks that have permeable boundaries. However, the distinction of ESI is that it not only maximizes the resource potential of a community’s social diversity, “ESI promotes change” (Flora et al., 1997: 627).

Communities with ESI focus on the process, rather than concentrating on the ends; therefore, ESI is “highly related to successful economic development projects” (Flora et al., 1997: 634). As well, communities with ESI not only have both people and businesses that are willing to contribute resources to the community, these communities also have community members willing to invest themselves into the civic organizations of the community (Flora et al., 1997). Community members in communities with ESI are also linked with one another through acquaintanceship; however, this does not address the patterns of relationships or if there are meaningful ties among the different social organizations within the community. Thus, Granovetter (1973) asserted that the strength of a tie is determined by the emotional intensity, the mutual confiding, and the reciprocity that occurs over a period of time. However, because of the different circles that they travel in, those who share weak ties with others will have access to different sources of resources than those who share strong ties with one another.

The distribution of resources provides an indicator of the different levels of need in a social system; nevertheless, an unequal distribution of resources is normally found in all social systems. Rogers (1974) stressed that those who lack resources are at a disadvantage in the exchange process, while those that possess an excess of resources are able to influence a change in the behavior of others by transforming a portion of their additional resources into a favorable outcome. Roles and institutional positions, as well as the maintenance of these roles or positions that are held in a social system, also affect the distribution of resources. Furthermore, a social

system's norms affect the exchangeability of resources. Although there are always deviations from the normative order of an exchange, a social system's norms dictate when resources may or may not be exchanged. Therefore, Macneil (1986) believed that conducting the exchange in accordance with a social system's norms contributes to social solidarity.

Macneil contended that (1986: 577) all patterns of exchange that are accepted by participants enhance social solidarity; however, "all real life exchange takes place in the context of relations more extensive than the exchange itself." Astley and Sachdeva (1984) continued to say that resources, which are obtained through exchange, vary in terms of how difficult they are to secure and in terms of how critical they are to the functioning of an organization. Therefore, because the distribution of resources is a social phenomenon that varies from one social system to the next and is susceptible to the ebb and flow of social life, Rogers (1974) declared that the distribution of resources must be confronted by a thorough analysis of power and must be studied in reference to specific social systems, which in this study encompasses the rural community of Norton, Kansas.

Rural Community Development

Early ecologists, such as Park (1936), described the community as an organized territory, completely rooted by individuals who live in competitive co-operation with an assemblage of plants, animals, and humans in a complex and interrelated manner, preserving its identity and integrity throughout the changes in its phases of existence. In the course of this development, the community moves through a series of more or less clearly defined stages, in which it may either be totally destroyed or may take a new direction that will alter its existing organization of life (Park, 1936; Darling and Randel, 1996). There have been many rural communities that barely provided for the basic necessities of its members, while there are those that have grown in population, economic activity, social programs, governance, and viable infrastructure. In the developing community, "each phase is its own executioner, and itself brings a new phase into existence" (Wells, Huxley, and Wells, 1934: 977).

Historically, expansion of the rural community's business and economic opportunities led to further expansion of all other aspects of the community. Nevertheless, as the impetus for growth and development declined, many rural communities faced a future of deteriorating infrastructure, diminishing business vitality, and a loss of jobs and population (Darling and

Randel, 1996). Although rural development programs¹⁰ were established in an attempt to stabilize the deterioration and reverse the decline of the community, researchers observed that many of these early programs focused only on economic development (Deshpande, Pulver, and Wilkening, 1978; Clarke and Gaile, 1989; Eisinger, 1997). Promoters of economic development advocated industrial parks, tax write-offs, and other enticements that brought new businesses into the community (John, 1993; Kraybill and Weber, 1995). However, in many cases, the narrow focus on economic development resulted in environmental degradation, an increased cost of public services, and in social disruption and inequities.

Although rural economic viability is imperative to the health and existence of rural communities, Castle (1993: 16) proclaimed that “rural development is not just rural economic development.” Because economic instability was experienced as a result of many of these programs, rural communities responded by developing programs that attempted to create a healthy and diversified base (Deshpande, Pulver, and Wilkening, 1978). Unfortunately, many of these new programs were designed to fit all rural communities. However, since enormous diversity exists in the natural and human resources of rural America, there are those (Cooper, 1993; John, 1993) who insisted that generic programs for development do not fit well in rural communities, as they cannot accommodate the diversity of local conditions and needs. Because challenges and opportunities vary by community, Whitener and McGranahan (2003: 8) stressed that “rural diversity means that there is no single recipe for rural prosperity.”

According to the USDA (2006), rural development is the overall improvement of rural community conditions that not only consists of economic development, but also includes all other quality of life considerations, such as housing, infrastructure, and the environment. Darling and Upendram (2004) concur that an array of economic, social, and administrative programs, leading to the expansion of all aspects of the rural community, are required to support the community’s comprehensive development programs. Although rural communities can approach development in different ways, Flora, Flora, and Fey (2004) observe that rural communities, which experience a wider range of successful outcomes, not only focus on

¹⁰ Rural community development will be defined for this study as the revitalization of the rural community’s quality of life that is produced by the efficient use and maintenance of productive resources, in which a healthy and diversified economic base is created that builds community solidarity, enhances the lives of its members and increases their capacity to participate in the programs needed to improve Norton.

development that strengthens the economy, they also engage in activities that improve all aspects of community life, such as education, health care, child care, and recreation.

Community development programs that have successful outcomes regard rural development as a complex system that requires vision, dedication, and hard work, and which recognize that while rural communities share many features in common, they also differ in significant ways, thus “once you’ve seen one rural community...you’ve seen one rural community” (Flora, Flora, and Fey, 2004: 8). While the problems associated with specific rural areas have often been referred to federal agencies for a comprehensive solution, Castle (1993) asserted that rural problems are diverse and complex. Consequently, solutions must reflect the diverse nature of local conditions and circumstances; therefore, diversity must be viewed as an asset that creates opportunities for rural development. Fey, Bregendahl, and Flora (2006) also declare that when community development efforts are participatory, and when the rural community gives strong consideration to investing well in its capital resources, the community’s development programs will have far more reaching and greater impacts on the community.

Community development is the “the promotion of solidarity,” the positive response to the erosion of solidarity that was ushered in by industrialization (Bhattacharyya, 2004: 6). Walton (1987) claimed that widespread industrial production existed in rural villages and small towns long before the urban factory became mechanized. As industry migrated from rural areas to urban settings, a pattern of uneven development began that continues today on a global level. This global industrial system not only affects the organization of local industry, it also shapes the organization of communities. As a result, Walton (1987) contended that the key mediation of diverse social factors will lie within both culture and the community. Because economic, social, and political interactions have expanded the boundaries of the community, it is important that solutions to rural problems not only focus on the diversity of local conditions, but as well, focus on comprehensive community development programs that are understood in the context of the interdependence between regional, national, and global social and economic activities (Littrell and Hobbs, 1989; Cooper, 1993; Castle, 1993; Castle, 1998a; Whitener and McGranahan, 2003).

“If community development is about building the capacity for social and economic change, the concept of power is essential” (Hustedde and Ganowicz, 2002: 4). The potential for power should also be regarded as equally essential when planning and implementing community development, since those who actually influence specific changes are likely to very different

from those designated as the potential sources of influence (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1957[1955]). By virtue of the resources that are held by local community members and outside agencies, Rogers (1974: 1429) insisted that their potential to influence “the distribution of resources and its effect on who influences whom are important phenomena that must be taken into account” when studying the power structures of the community. As a result, it is considered to be a reality of rural community development that RCDPs must know who holds; and therefore, controls or who has greater access to, the resources of the community before planning and implementing rural community development programs.

Conducting an assessment of the community’s capitals is encouraged by Flora et al. (2006) as a way to identify the resources needed for the community development process. Information on the how the community utilizes and invests its built, financial, political, social, human, cultural, and natural capital resources can also be provided from this assessment. By using the CCF to identify the rural community’s capitals, as well as to plan and evaluate community development programs, the patterns of interaction among the capitals can be assessed, realistic projects can be determined, and practical indicators can be defined. Furthermore, participation can be fostered by allowing rural community members to become actively involved in the implementation and evaluation of the community’s development programs. The knowledge that is gained from an assessment of the community’s capitals not only helps to build solidarity, it also contributes to the ability of the community to achieve rural community development programs that are successful.

CHAPTER 3 - Community Capitals

Overview of Community Capitals

Capital is a force that is inscribed in objective or subjective structures, and is the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world. Bourdieu (1986) claimed that the structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital represent the structure of the social world at any given moment in time, in which every moment is perfectly independent of the previous one. Capital, in its objectified form, has the tendency to persist in its being; however, it takes time to accumulate and reproduce itself in an identical or expanded form. The set of constraints that govern the functioning of capital, in a durable way, is inscribed in the reality of the social world, which therefore determines the chance of success for practices.

Converting certain practices and objects into money is extremely difficult because this conversion cannot be socially recognized as economic; therefore, capital and profit in all their forms must have the ability to change into one another. Because it is impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless capital is reintroduced in all its forms, Bourdieu (1986) argued that capital cannot be recognized solely as economic theory. When capital is reduced to mercantile exchange, it implicitly defines other forms of exchange as noneconomic, and therefore disinterested. Thus, the material types of capital, which are economic in a restricted sense, present themselves in the immaterial form of social capital or cultural capital, and vice versa.

While Bourdieu indicated that social, cultural, and economic capital represent the structure of the social world, Castle (1998a) implied that rural capital stock, which encompasses social, human, natural, and manmade (built) forms of capital, is the principal measure of the rural economy's health. The quality and amount of these four forms of rural capital help to satisfy individual and community aspirations by providing a useful measuring tool, which assesses the effectiveness of the actions that affect the productivity of the rural community. As well, rural capital stock encourages communities to consider the extent to which one capital may be substituted for other forms of capital, so that these rural communities can continue to exercise their autonomy.

Not only does rural capital stock contribute to autonomy, it also provides a conceptual base for addressing common problems, and permits people to be more productive by fulfilling individual aspirations within the rural community. Although each of the four capitals described by Castle (1998b) has its own unique characteristics, all share the fundamental characteristics of capital, which require that attention be given to change over time. Castle (1998b: 624) proposed that “rural capital encourages consideration of the destruction of some capital as well as the creation of other forms;” therefore, as new problems and new knowledge emerge, rural capital will continue to remain of central concern in rural community development efforts.

Emery and Flora (2006) analyze rural community development efforts using the Community Capitals Framework, which identifies assets in each form of capital, as well as the types of capital invested, the interaction among capitals, and the resulting impacts across capitals. Capital is formed when the community’s assets are invested to create new assets; furthermore, Flora and Flora (2008) assert that every community has resources, or assets, no matter how rural or isolated the community may be. Assets can be transformed from one form of capital to another, and as one capital increases, increases in other capitals occur more readily. However, if one form of capital is emphasized over all the other forms of capital, assets become decapitalized, thereby compromising social equity, the environment, and the economy.

A healthy economy is necessary in order to have a healthy community. However, rural community development is a complex system that should go beyond economics and job creation; therefore, the focus should be on strengthening all aspects of community life. Emery and Flora (2006) insist that the strategies, which promote sustainable development of the rural community through the use of community capitals, cannot be measured only by increases in the stock of assets within the specific capitals, but instead require an increase in the flow of assets that build stock in capitals. Therefore, all capital resources affect the community's capacity to initiate the process of change that better the quality of life for the rural community and all of its members. These capital resources are described by Flora et al. (2006) as built, financial, political, social, human, cultural, and natural capitals.

Built Capital

According to Flora and Flora (2008), built capital is the rural community's infrastructure; the permanent physical installations, such as utility, water, and waste systems, streets and

airports, as well as schools, hospitals, communication facilities, and buildings. Built capital facilitates production in and of itself, and refers to the equipment and facilities that are needed to support the community's activities, which enable individuals and businesses to be more productive. Although rural development often focuses on enhancing built capital, it can divert financial capital from other investments; therefore, built capital cannot ensure the community's economic well-being, especially if the development of social capital is ignored.

While stocks of social capital increase through their use, Woolcock (1998) contended that built capital is consumed or becomes worn as it is used. Because much of the existing infrastructure found in rural areas was constructed in the early 1900s, Flora and Flora (2008) warn that it is now deteriorating. Many rural communities are now facing the difficult choice of deciding whether to change infrastructure specifications in order to have affordable built capital, to share built capital with other rural communities, or to prioritize built capital investments, in which some built capital will have to be abandoned.

Rural communities realize that in order to prosper, their built capital must be sound and well-developed. Unfortunately, Flora and Flora (2008) report that the per capita cost of maintaining or improving built capital tends to be high in rural areas. Many rural communities lack the economic base to sufficiently finance the large financial outlays that are required for infrastructure improvements, either because of lower population densities or because the cost of installation and maintenance increases with distance. State and federal involvement with local infrastructure development has also declined; therefore, decisions concerning improvements to built capital are often now made by local governments and are based on the perceived needs of community members, as well as the rural community's available resources.

In rural areas, agricultural industrialization has been responsible for the creation of built capital that can increase the rural community's resources. Castle (1998a) revealed that agricultural industrialization contributes to the rural community's built capital because it has the capacity to create other capital, which serves to enhance the local tax base that maintains or improves needed rural community services, such as schools or health-care facilities. Agricultural industrialization has been a powerful force in rural development and it will continue to create even more changes in the future. However, because rural America is highly diverse, the costs and benefits of agricultural industrialization will continue to vary from one rural community to the next.

While the benefits from agricultural industrialization have been well-documented, it also has generated costs and great conflict. Castle (1998a) disclosed that agricultural industrialization not only affects social, human, and natural capital, but also affects built capital, as well. The creation of built capital that is used for poultry and swine production is highly specialized and is designed to serve specific production plans. Such structures may detract from the countryside, and may not be well suited to future rural activities. Therefore, the full range of effects from agricultural industrialization need to be considered, so that rural communities can maintain or enhance not only their built capital, but all of their rural capital stock, as well.

Financial Capital

Bourdieu (1986) proposed that all types of capital can be derived from economic capital. The transformation of economic capital into social capital presupposes an expenditure of time and attention in an endeavor that is bound to be viewed as pure waste from a narrowly economic standpoint; however, in terms of social exchange, it is a solid investment, in which monetary or some other form of profits will appear over time. However, these transformed and disguised forms of economic capital occur only through a great effort of transformation, and can produce their most specific effects only to the extent that they conceal the fact that economic capital is at their root. As well, everything that helps to disguise economic capital also tends to increase the risk of loss; therefore, there can be a high degree of uncertainty in the transactions between holders of different types of capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Financial capital represents the transactions that convert resources into money or other assets. Although financial capital is often interpreted to mean money, Flora and Flora (2008: 175) insist that “money is not always financial capital, nor is financial capital simply money.” Rural communities depend on financial capital in order for their local governments to invest public capital into roads, schools, and other services needed by businesses and community members, and invest in private capital so that community members can establish and maintain farms and businesses. Financial capital is important not only because it is money that can be invested to make more money, financial capital is important because rural communities can invest it to increase human and built capital (Flora, Flora, and Fey, 2004).

Financial capital refers to the wealth that is accumulated for future community development, which is produced through the financial resources that the community has

available to underwrite business development and to invest in capacity building, as well as its capability to support civic and social entrepreneurship (Lorenz, 1999). However, because of bank deregulation and new laws that make it easier to move financial capital from place to place, Flora and Flora (2008) disclose that financial capital is becoming more mobile; and as a result, there is often a crisis of capital that is available for rural businesses and communities. As well, the increasing cost of public services, combined with a decreasing population and tax base, have made many rural communities dependent on federal and state sources of financial capital. Therefore, rural communities often have a tendency to act on federal or state priorities, rather than on local community needs and development.

As with entrepreneurial social and human capital, entrepreneurial financial capital enhances community economic growth and development. Bates (1990) claimed that the input levels of financial capital are a strong determinant of the survival and longevity of new entrepreneurial small businesses. Relative to older and more established businesses, new businesses are more likely to discontinue operations, or have smaller annual sales and less mean profits. Irrespective of the source of financial capital, there are those (Zeira, 1987; Bates, 1990) who have shown that greater quantities of both debt and equity capital improve the viability of new small businesses. As well, Flora, Flora, and Fey (2004) advise that rural communities must reduce the risk of local investments, identify innovative sources of venture capital, and retain financial capital in order to have successful business and community development.

Political Capital

Political capital is the ability of people to find their own voice, and to engage in actions that contribute to their community's well-being (Aigner et al., 2001). Community groups use the actions of power, voice, organization, and connection to influence the distribution of public and private resources; therefore, Flora, Flora, and Fey (2004: 145) assert that “power is the ability to create a situation that otherwise would not happen or to prevent an event from occurring that others wish to make happen.” Although power can be augmented through outside connections, those who possess power within the community not only affect the quality of life for community members, they also determine the future existence of the community itself.

Political capital often reflects the dominant cultural capital; therefore, there is a tendency in rural communities to use power to support the status quo and to discourage groups with

different agendas. However, Hyman et al. (2001) surmise that the power structure within the community depends on the specific issue under consideration; no one individual or group influences every event that occurs in the community. Therefore, the key to building and maintaining political capital is the willingness of community members to become involved in commissions and local government, and to serve on various Boards. As well, there are those (Putnam, 1994; Hyman et al., 2001) who showed that in order to develop political capital, it is critical for community members and groups to know about other groups that hold opposing views, to be persistent, to be organized, and to stay active.

Even political activists sometimes conceive of the community as a voluntary association of individuals (Bellah et al., 1985). Although there are a number of ways to identify which individuals and groups have power, Flora, Flora, and Fey (2004) indicate that it is important to identify vested interests and to link them to those who hold political capital. When political capital is rooted in networks of social interaction that are organized horizontally, rather than hierarchically, Putnam (1994) found that these networks facilitate communication and amplify information about the trustworthiness of other individuals. As well, as individuals in these communities become engaged by public issues, they trust that others will act fairly and obey the law, which in turn enhances integrity, civic participation, and solidarity in the community.

Social Capital

Social capital is the aggregate of actual or potential resources that are linked to a durable network of recognition and mutual acquaintance, which entitles its members to credit in collectivity-owned capital. These relationships may only exist in the practical state, in which material or symbolic exchanges maintain them; however, Bourdieu (1986) contended that they may also be socially instituted and guaranteed by the application of a common family name, class, or community. Although they may not be consciously pursued (Bourdieu, 1986; Woolcock, 1998), the material and symbolic profits that are derived from membership in a group, such as the community, incorporates expectations of reciprocity and are the basis of the solidarity that makes them possible. Macneil (1986) also reasoned that when solidarity is introduced into exchange relations, it is also introduced into all elements of society and permits the extension of reciprocity.

Social capital consists of a whole set of instituting acts and relationships that are designed to simultaneously form and inform; and as well, are comprised of actual or potential resources that maintain and reinforce exchanges. Bourdieu (1986) asserted that these exchanges not only produce mutual knowledge and recognition, they also reproduce membership; nevertheless, these exchanges also reaffirm the limits beyond which the constitutive exchange cannot take place. Institutions exist in modern societies that are designed to favor legitimate, desirable exchanges (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990). However, these institutions also work to exclude illegitimate exchanges by producing occasions, places, or practices, which bring members together who are as homogenous as possible, in regards to the persistence and existence of a group, such as the community.

Within the community, the reproduction of social capital presupposes an unceasing effort of sociability, which through the expenditure of time and energy affirms and reaffirms recognition through a continuous series of exchanges. Regardless of whether they are directly or indirectly composed of economic capital, these exchanges are not profitable or even conceivable, unless a specific competence is invested and maintained as an integral part of social capital. Bourdieu (1986) proposed that this explains why the profitability of accumulating and maintaining social capital rises in proportion to the size of the capital. Members who are richly endowed with capital, which is mainly social, but can also be cultural and even economic, are sought after because their work of sociability is highly productive when it is exerted.

The volume of social capital that can be possessed depends on the network of connections that can be effectively mobilized by its members. Although the existence of the network of connections is not a natural or social given, it is the product of an endless effort at institution, which is necessary in order to produce and reproduce lasting and useful relationships (Bourdieu, 1986). These relationships that are necessary and elective, enable integration, infer institutionally guaranteed rights, and imply durable obligations of respect and friendship (Bourdieu, 1986; Woolcock, 1998). Therefore, the network of connections is the product of individual or collective investment strategies aimed at establishing or reproducing social capital, which is used to transform short or long-term relationships, such as those found in the family or the community.

Every community conveys an institutionalized form of delegation into the hands of a single member or group of members that represent, act, and exercise power on its behalf, in order

to concentrate the totality of its social capital. Not only is this delegation responsible for defending the collective honor of its weakest members, it is also responsible for limiting the consequences of failed membership by excommunicating lapsed or problem members. Although Bourdieu (1986) warned that this delegation may attempt to misappropriate or embezzle its members' social capital, the function of the delegation is not to threaten, but is to legitimately represent of all its members in order to aid with the conservation and accumulation of collectively-owned social capital.

According to Emery and Flora (2006), the accumulation of social capital constitutes the best strategy for successful rural community development, in that it enhances community well-being and promotes a self-reinforcing cycle for increasing opportunity. Rural community development usually begins with infusions of built or financial capital; however, when rural communities commence their development by investing in social capital stock, a flow of assets is created that leads to a subsequent increase in the stock of multiple capitals. As well, Svendsen and Svendsen (2003) report that social capital reduces transaction costs and enhances economic growth through the voluntary provision of collective goods, such as common norms, trust, and human exchange.

As a specific configuration of social capital that enhances community economic growth and development, entrepreneurial social capital also promotes inclusive internal and external networks, the mobilization of local resources, and the willingness of community members to consider alternative methods of reaching goals (Flora and Flora, 1993; Flora et al., 1997). Emery and Flora (2006:28) find that when the focus of economic development centers only on "industrial attraction," there may be little or no return on this investment. However, when there is bridging of social capital between local entrepreneurs and outside entrepreneur expertise, these partners not only expand their knowledge of which interaction works to create good jobs, they also develop a new vision of the rural community's potential.

The bridging of social capital plays a critical role in sustaining rural community development by generating new social capital, creating access to additional resources, and establishing new bonding among organizations and communities. Emery and Flora (2006) observe that as entrepreneurial social capital increases, political capital also increases, which is critical in sustaining rural community development. There is also an increase in cultural capital as the upward spiral of asset creation impels community members to not only support local

businesses, but to also develop their own personal ideas. Furthermore, as the rural community becomes more supportive of entrepreneurial efforts, the subsequent growth in businesses and in jobs expands financial and built capital, and has implications for expanding human capital by increasing incomes and by providing families with additional options within the community.

Families are the major source of social capital; however, Castle (1998a: 18) suggested that agricultural industrialization changes the structure of social capital in the farm family because “as economic development occurs, the need for social capital continues, but the most valuable kind of social capital will change.” The type of cooperation among members of the farm family changes as a result of agricultural industrialization; however, this does not mean that there is less interdependence or that mutual trust has disappeared. As well, when members of the farm family obtain employment off the farm there is a change in the mix of farm activities. However, Castle (1998a) pointed out that the structure of social capital promotes activities and accomplishments that are not possible in its absence; therefore, social capital refers to arrangements that facilitate cooperation among the members of the farm family.

Agricultural industrialization not only impacts the structure of social capital in the farm family, it also creates changes in the rural community. Just as with any major business enterprise that alters the characteristics of social capital, agricultural industrialization has enormous impacts on the rural community’s capital stock. Because communication and trust are necessary for all forms of social capital, Castle (1998a) insisted that it is important that those who promote and are responsible for economic development should also establish that agricultural industrialization will not only enhance the rural community’s capital stock, but that it will also positively affect the capacity of rural communities to meet future challenges.

Human Capital

Human capital includes personal attributes that enable rural community members to earn a living, strengthen the family, and contribute to the community. Education, health, and interpersonal skills are important assets of human capital. As well, leadership capacity is also an important asset of human capital; how community members exercise these skills affects collective or productive enterprises, and determines whether they can make a contribution to their family and the community (Flora and Flora, 2008). Some researchers believe that education and training are the most important forms of human capital; however, Flora and Flora

(2008: 84) state that while “the dominant cultural capital tends to define human capital in terms of formal learning, human capital is far more than educational attainment.”

Dreze and Sen (1995: 43) stressed that human capital has intrinsic value, as well as instrumental value, in that the most fulfilling achievement a person can aspire to is not just being a “component of human capital,” but in valuing health, education, skills, and self-esteem for their own sake. Because people cannot be separated from their human capital assets as they can from their built and financial assets, Becker (2002) concurs that knowledge, skills, health, and education are valuable human capital assets. However, there are those (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964; Becker, 2002) who also believed that education is the most important investment that can be made into human capital. After netting out the direct and indirect costs of education, those that receive a high school and college education, or as well, complete on-the-job training programs, greatly increase their income.

As a consequence of human investment, human capital has been increasing at a rate relative to income and other non-human forms of capital. While the productive capacity of human beings has become vastly larger than all other forms of wealth added together, Schultz (1961) commented that human capital does not stay abreast of physical capital; thus, human capital becomes a limiting factor in economic growth. However, because human capital has both quantitative and qualitative dimensions, the method for estimating human capabilities should be calculated by its yield rather than its cost. Therefore, Schultz (1961) advised that formally organized education, on-the-job training, and study programs for adults should be implemented in order to yield a return in human capital, as these investments will not only increase human capabilities, but will also improve skills over a period of time.

Several researchers (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964; Coleman, 1988) indicated that the most important and original development in education has been the idea that human capital creates change by improving skills and capabilities, which therefore shapes the ability for people to act in new ways. Bates (1990) found that investment in human capital, such as years of education, managerial experience, and small business exposure within one’s family, encourages the development of entrepreneurial values and increases capabilities in small business practices. Entrepreneurs that invest in education increase the probability that their small business will survive; and as well, entrepreneurs who have family with entrepreneurial backgrounds

consistently report small business longevity. Therefore, educational and familial investments not only improve small business viability, they also increase entrepreneurial human capital.

As with social and cultural capital, Becker (2002: 3) insists that “no discussion of human capital can omit the influence of families on the knowledge, skills, values, and habits of their children.” Coleman (1998) implied that family background, as an investment into human capital that is an approximate measure of parents’ education, provides a cognitive environment that aids learning and affects various factors of educational achievement. However, Coleman (1988: S110) asserted that if a parent’s human capital is not complemented by social capital, which is produced by parents being an important part in their children’s lives, “it is irrelevant to the child's educational growth that the parent has a great deal, or a small amount, of human capital.”

Economic growth closely depends on the synergies between education and human capital. Becker (1992) claimed that this is why large increases in education and training have accompanied major advances in the technological knowledge of all countries that have had significant economic growth. As well, education and training assist the manufacturing and service sectors to cope with changing technologies and advancing productivity. Unfortunately, Flora and Flora (2008) warn that rural areas have lagged behind in the educational level of their labor force, which is one reason why manufacturing plants that employ newer technologies often do not locate in rural areas. This in turn, can affect the rural community's success in attracting new industrial and business enterprises.

Although there are fewer modern farmers who engage in agriculture as this enterprise becomes more industrialized, Castle (1998a) proposed that agricultural industrialization will continue to have a vested interest in developing and maintaining human capital. Flora and Flora (2008) assert that as a human capital asset, employment meets the human needs of providing an income, establishing a sense of identity, and offering social interaction. Although physical labor and strength are often not well-rewarded and are frequently supplied by immigrant labor, the human capital assets of strength, tenacity, and physical labor are important in many forms of employment and will continue to be valuable in many business and industrial enterprises.

Values inhibit us from looking upon human beings as capital goods; however, Schultz (1961) contended that the failure to treat human resources as a form of capital, as the produced means of production and the product of investment, fosters the classical notion that manual labor requires little knowledge and skill. “Laborers have become capitalists not from a diffusion of

ownership of corporation stocks, as folklore would have it, but from the acquisition of knowledge and skill that have economic value” (Schultz, 1961: 3). Although their affect on labor is often underrated, education and on-the-job training are important not only because of their effect on earnings and economic variables, but also because of the “psychic” earnings that are received (Becker, 1962: 31).

On-the-job training is a process that not only raises earnings, it also raises future productivity. As an investment that is made in the workplace rather than in an educational institution, on-the-job training increases productivity by assisting workers to perfect old skills and to learn new skills, which gives workers less incentive to quit their jobs and gives business enterprises less incentive to fire or lay off workers. However, investments in physical health and in the psychic components of emotional health are also associated with increases in labor productivity, and are important determinants of earnings. Therefore, investments in physical and emotional health that increase worker productivity can have the same effect on human capital as on-the-job training programs (Becker, 1962).

Gutierrez-Montes (2005) suggests that investments in human capital lead to increases in the stock of financial, political, social, and cultural capital. This flow of assets across capitals can initiate a process of assets building on assets, thereby leading to the effect of an upward spiral. An upward spiral leads to a cumulative effect, in which assets that are gained will also increase the likelihood that other assets across the capitals will be gained. Emery and Flora (2006) support the belief that the interaction across capitals spurs the momentum to provide more opportunities to increase community capitals. Building on assets that expand human capital not only develops new knowledge and skills, it also changes the way that people see themselves as part of the community.

Cultural Capital

According to Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital traditionally exists in three forms. Most of the properties of the first form of cultural capital are linked to the body; therefore, they are accumulated in the embodied state, which presupposes a labor of assimilation and the personal investment of time and sacrifice. In this form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body, external wealth is converted into an integral part of the owner and cannot be transmitted instantaneously by purchase, bequest, or exchange. Although it cannot be accumulated beyond

the appropriating capacities of its owner, embodied cultural capital yields profits of distinction for its owner and derives a scarcity value from its position in the distribution of cultural capital. Therefore, because the acquisition of cultural capital is more disguised than that of economic capital, it is predisposed to function as symbolic capital.

Cultural capital, in the sense of embodied capital, is mediated by the relationship of appropriation between its owner and the resources that are objectively available (Bourdieu, 1986). The profits that are produced are thereby mediated by the relationship of competition between the owner and the other possessors of capital who are competing for the same goods. Thus, the link between economic and cultural capital is established through mediation of the time needed for acquisition. Because of the correlation between the length of time for which an owner can prolong the acquisition process and the amount of time that is provided to the owner that is free from economic necessity, Bourdieu (1986) believed that the transmission of cultural capital is the best hidden form of hereditary capital, and therefore should receive greater weight in the system of reproduction strategies.

A second form of cultural capital can also exist in the objectified state, which is described by Bourdieu (1986) as the form of cultural goods, such as pictures, books, and instruments that are transmissible in its materiality. However, what is transmissible is its legal ownership and not what constitutes the possession of the means of “consuming” a painting or using an instrument (Bourdieu, 1986: 247). Thus, the objectified state of cultural goods can be appropriated both materially through economic capital, and symbolically through cultural capital. Because objectified cultural capital exists as symbolically and materially active, it therefore remains irreducible to that which each owner of the means of production can appropriate through economic capital, and to the extent that access and use is granted to the desired embodied cultural capital.

The third form of cultural capital, which is found in the institutionalized state, is a form of objectification that must be set apart because it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital it is presumed to guarantee (Bourdieu, 1986). Academic qualifications, as a form of institutionalized capital, confer upon its holder a certificate of cultural competence that has a conventional and legally guaranteed value with respect to culture. Because of the infinite differences in performance, this form of capital produces absolute and recognized differences that separate guaranteed, institutionalized competence from that of simple cultural capital.

Academic qualifications not only make it possible to compare its holders, it also makes it possible to establish conversion rates between economic capital and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Flora and Flora (2008) proclaim that cultural capital determines what constitutes knowledge, how it is to be achieved, and how it is to be validated. Cultural capital serves as the socialization process through which values can be transmitted by both verbal and nonverbal communication, and can also be considered as the daily or seasonal rituals that are observed, or the way that the world is regarded. Cultural capital also includes the values and symbols reflected in art, language, and customs, as well as clothing, books, and machines. Families and communities impart cultural capital in terms of aspirations to achieve a higher status or succeed educationally through formal schooling; therefore, those who are able to provide their family with advantages in cultural capital also increase their ability to form social and financial capital.

Cultural capital is transmitted from one generation to the next through social institutions that reinforce values and support personal connections. As with social and human capital, families are the primary means of transmitting cultural capital; therefore, Flora and Flora (2008) stress that rural families are deeply aware of the opportunity structure that is present in their community. Families, who expect their children to stay in the local community to continue operating family-owned farms or businesses, remain aware of the job opportunities and class structures within the community. Therefore, cultural capital, which includes the values of self-improvement, optimism, and industriousness, along with the knowledge and connections that function as a source of social status within the rural community, are transferred from parents to their children, in order to ensure their economic survival.

Rural communities not only pursue economic survival, they also fight hard to sustain the survival of their local schools. Local schools contribute to the accumulation of cultural capital by ensuring that the values and attitudes of the rural community are respected and transmitted; and as well, they also play an important role in orientating children to their future position in society. However, Flora and Flora (2008) caution that families who live in declining rural communities often require that their children leave the community in order to improve their cultural capital through outside job opportunities or formal education. Therefore, in declining rural communities where few jobs are available locally, education may be oriented toward

outmigration, thereby leading to disinvestments in the community by both parents and their children.

Investments are made by the rural community by collectively purchasing the services of professionals, such as educators and ministers, who have the respect of the community and are critical in reproducing the community's cultural capital. As a form of cultural capital, Verter (2003) points out that spiritual capital is also embodied in the socially structured mode of acting in the world, and is objectified in the form of ideologies and theologies, and in material and symbolic objects, such as texts and investments. As well, spiritual capital is institutionalized through the power that churches exercise in order to promote a demand for spiritual goods within the community. However, Bourdieu (1991) implied that in order to perpetuate the fundamental properties of cultural capital, religious specialists must have an investment in the outcome, a talent for innovation, and a mastery of the strategies required for success.

Natural Capital

Natural capital refers to those assets that abide in a particular location, such as natural resources, amenities, and weather; however, Pretty (1998) acknowledged that natural capital also shapes the cultural capital that is connected to place. According to Flora, Flora, and Fey (2004), Native Americans managed place in order to develop a subsistence economy that focused on converting natural capital to social and cultural capital; however, European settlements focused on transforming the abundant source of natural capital to financial capital. Through the transformation of place, Flora, Flora, and Fey (2004) warn that the access and control of land, water, biodiversity, and energy has not only caused many conflicts in the attempt to convert natural capital to financial capital, but as well, in the consumption of natural capital in order to enhance social, cultural, and built capital.

Goodland and Daly (1996: 1003) claimed that there have been major problems in valuing natural capital; therefore, diversity, honesty, identity, and discipline that constitute the part of social capital referred to as “moral capital” and is often the least subject to rigorous measurement, is probably the most important means for promoting sustainability and protecting natural capital. While economists prefer to value capital in monetary terms, Goodland and Daly (1996) emphasized that natural capital must no longer be considered a free good, but should be calculated as a limiting factor in development.

Natural, human, and built capital have often been viewed as interchangeable by many economists; however, the rapid degradation and depletion of essential resources, such as topsoil, groundwater, and biodiversity, have been shown to reduce the future potential carrying capacities by depleting essential natural capital stock (Goodland and Daly, 1996; McDonald 1996). McDonald (1996) reported that during the 1980s, economists began analyzing the relationship between production and the environment, observing that the preservation of natural capital stock required major reconstruction of the economic analysis of development. Therefore, development that is environmentally sustainable must not only protect natural capital, it must also sustain social, human, and political capital, as well.

Development, which conserves and protects natural capital, requires rural communities to develop planning decisions that focus on renewable and nonrenewable resources, waste capacity, and the maintenance of biodiversity. As well, McDonald (1996) surmised that in order to protect natural capital, development must also resolve the conflict that occurs between natural capital and social, human, and political capital. Unfortunately, “the primary reasons for the transference of growth policy authority from local to state government has been the unwillingness or inability of local governments to deal adequately with growth issues that transcend municipal boundaries” (Bollens, 1992: 455).

“Growth” refers to an increase in size by assimilation; however, “develop” means to bring out potential and advance to a higher state (Goodland and Daly, 1996: 1004); therefore, development should maintain environmental assets, not deplete them. As natural capital becomes more limited, “cultivated natural capital” will become more prevalent (Goodland and Daly, 1996: 1005). As a hybrid between natural and human capital, cultivated natural capital will continue to account for most of the food we eat and provide for a large portion of the wood and fibers we use. Cultivated natural capital is decomposable into human capital and natural capital; however, Goodland and Daly (1996) stressed that the more natural capital is consumed in making cultivated natural capital, the more rapidly natural capital will become depleted.

There has been considerable concern expressed about the impacts of agricultural industrialization on natural capital. Therefore, the burden of proving natural capital will not suffer damage that is irreversible or reversible only at a significant cost should rest on those who advocate and are involved in this form of cultivated natural capital. Because negative impacts may occur to the soil, groundwater and atmosphere, Castle (1998a) declared that social

regulation, through organizations such as the Environmental Protection Agency, along with economic regulation and special agricultural legislation, will continue to modify or regulate the business practices of agricultural industrialization. However, Clark (1995) argued that the destruction of natural capital will persist until communities defend their environment; therefore, the health of natural capital must take precedence over economic development.

CHAPTER 4 - Methodology

Research Objectives

The goal of this dissertation was to analyze the outcome of Norton County Economic Development's Downtown Development program, which was a part of Norton County's Economic Development Strategic Plan for community and economic development in Norton, Kansas. The objectives of this dissertation were to:

Research Objective 1: Identify the built, financial, political, social, human, cultural, and natural capital resources, which were held by local community members and outside agencies, that could be mobilized to facilitate implementation of the Downtown Development program.

Research Objective 2: Establish if the capital resources, which were identified as being able to facilitate the implementation of the Downtown Development program, were utilized in this community development program.

Research Objective 3: Determine if the local community members and outside agencies that hold the capital resources, which could be mobilized to facilitate the implementation of the Downtown Development program, also constituted the dynamic and interactive power structure within that system.

Case Study Method

The case study method was used for this study to produce limited generalizations concerning the Norton County Economic Development's Downtown Development program. Although Kaarbo and Beasley (1999) noted that the case study method often evokes discussion of the nature of theories or of the general laws that govern human behavior, this study draws on the Community Capitals Framework and was based on the practical application of the case study method. The control and distribution of resources, and its affect on rural community development are important phenomena that must be taken into account when rural community development practitioners plan and implement their rural community's development programs. Therefore, the outcome of the Downtown Development program was analyzed through the use of the case study method, to investigate whether Norton's RCDPs identified and mobilized their

community's capital resources, and then utilized these resources in the Downtown Development program.

Justification for using the case study method for this study is best described by various authors (Ragin, 1987; Orum, Feagin, and Sjoberg, 1991) as being useful for researchers that are interested in interpreting specific cases, and in coming to a general understanding of the phenomena through explanation rather than prediction (Salamon, 1996; Kaarbo and Beasley, 1999). The case study method is an intensive, descriptive approach that largely uses qualitative data to generate detailed insights about a very few subjects, and as a result is not intended to be statistically representative of larger populations (Johnson, 1996; Salamon, 1996). Because there is a great diversity of resources in America's rural communities, rural community development programs must be planned according to each community's assets. Norton may appear to be quantitatively similar to other communities in northwest Kansas concerning age, income, population, and housing data. However, data collection focused on the unique capital resources that community members and outside agencies hold that could facilitate the success of the Downtown Development program. Therefore, qualitative data was utilized for this study.

Case studies often make use of multiple qualitative methods for collecting data, such as interviews, observation, and content analysis (Jick, 1979; Kaarbo and Beasley, 1999). Research that is predominantly qualitative in nature produces findings that give rise to rich data; however, while replication within research is usually necessary to yield comparable data, replication in qualitative methods is exceedingly difficult (Ragin, 1987). Although qualitative methods are difficult to replicate, Weiss (1968: 344) contended that "qualitative data are apt to be superior to quantitative data in density of information, vividness, and clarity of meaning." In order to produce rich, vibrant data, this study built on participant observation and interviews with key informants to compliment the examination of archival, primary and secondary data. The qualitative nature of this study allowed the unique capital resources held by local community members and outside agencies to be more fully detailed, which also aided in determining the outcome of the Downtown Development program.

Jick (1979) acknowledged that multiple methods of compiling research data is useful whether or not there is convergence in the case study data. If there is convergence, the findings will not be attributable to method artifact and confidence in the results increase. If divergent findings emerge, there will be alternative, and probably more complex explanations for the

findings; however, divergent findings can also lead to an enriched explanation of the research objectives that are being studied. Jick (1979) also claimed that the development of unobtrusive measures from qualitative data is likely to be more innovative than most research methods, in that it tends to be a rich source of data. For this study, archival materials were examined as a rich source of unobtrusive data, and as well, primary data from the NCED Director's Reports, and secondary data from local newspapers and internet postings concerning the Downtown Development program were reviewed in a systematic manner for content that was relative to producing rich data.

The analysis of rich data benefits from the perceptions that are drawn from firsthand observations and personal experiences involving field work in an actual setting (Jick, 1979; Salamon, 1996). For this study, interviews with key informants were held to gather insight into the planning, implementation, and outcome of the Downtown Development program. Valuable data were also be obtained from participant observation of various meetings, which were conducted in order to determine if the resources that were held by local community members and outside agencies provided Norton's RCDPs with the expertise, funding, and technological support that not only benefited the Downtown Development program, but also assisted Norton in building upon its capital resources. Ragin (1987) pointed out that the case study method also encourages the researcher to examine cases as whole entities. Therefore, the outcome of the Downtown Development program was analyzed to determine if the capital resources that were identified as being important to the success of this program were the same capital resources that would be valuable for the success of the NCED's other community development programs, which are both considered to be whole entities of Norton County's Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Ragin (1987) asserted that the case study method is not used to explain variation, but is used to determine patterns of constant association through an approach that enriches the dialogue between ideas and evidence. This suggests that the evidence taken from outcome of the study of the Downtown Development program follows a coincidence of preconditions, which makes use of the idea that the CCF assisted Norton County's RCDPs in identifying Norton's community capital resources. Johnson (1966) furthered this notion by saying that case studies are invaluable in determining the success and failure of development processes, and are of importance in deciding the consequences and opportunities for future studies. In this study, the preconditions

found for the natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built capital resources of Norton County defined the outcomes that are expected to be found in the other community development programs as described in Norton County's Economic Development Strategic Plan. As with any rural area that is pursuing community development, Norton County's RCDPs need insight into the capital resources that they have available in order to mobilize these resources for successful development programs. Rural community development that is successful tends to create solidarity, which in turn, fosters participation in the implementation of the development programs that are designed to create healthy and revitalized rural communities.

Setting

The setting of this study is Norton County, Kansas. The territory that now comprises Norton County was named Oro by the Territorial Legislature in 1859. In March 1868, the boundaries of Norton County were defined by an Act of the Legislature, and was renamed in memory of Orloff Norton, Captain of Company L, Fifteenth Kansas cavalry. The name was suggested by Preston B. Plumb, who at that time was speaker of the Kansas House of Representatives. Norton County is approximately 30 miles square and has a land area of 877.8 square miles in northwest Kansas. The Prairie Dog Creek runs through the central portion of Norton County, the north fork of the Solomon River through the south, and Sappa Creek through the north. Norton County is bordered by Phillips County to the east, Graham County to the south, Decatur County to the west, and Furnas County, Nebraska to the north.

Data Collection

Fey, Bregendahl, and Flora (2006) caution that it can be challenging to measure how the community invests in its capital. Because capital resources are interconnected, measuring each capital involves separating one from another and then deciding the affect that they each have on a program. What may be a measure for a capital in one situation may be a measure for a different capital in different situation; therefore, measurement can be difficult in the determination of where to place indicators. However, because of the wide array of qualitative methods that can be used to collect data and interpret findings, Fey, Bregendahl, and Flora (2006: 5) propose that "by using qualitative data, the capital implied by different indicators can be better determined."

Flora and Flora (2008) show that investments in social capital impacts all other capitals; therefore, a good place to begin data collection would be with social capital indicators. As well, Fey, Bregendahl, and Flora (2006) indicate that natural capital forms the basis of the community's assets and is an important starting point in the CCF; however, it is not always easy to measure natural capital in relation to community development. Nevertheless, all capital resources can enhance other capitals or detract from other capitals, and in consideration that the focus of the Downtown Development program essentially began with the destruction of two of Norton's downtown buildings, data collection will begin with built capital indicators.

Built Capital is the permanent physical installations that have the capacity to create other capital. Built Capital enables individuals and businesses to be more productive, but it must focus on the needs of the community to be beneficial. Fey, Bregendahl, and Flora (2006) suggest that investments in built capital are the most beneficial when the community looks internally at existing resources and prioritizes projects based on the current financial capital of the community, as well as the future projections of community development efforts. The indicator for built capital was to determine if the physical structures, which are a part of the Norton Downtown Development program, were revitalized as a result of the Storefront Renewal Project.

Financial Capital is the available financial resources a community has to support civic and social entrepreneurship. Financial Capital can enhance a community's growth and development, and can be invested to increase the community's capital resources. Because economic relations often have an overlay with social interaction, which carries strong expectations of trust and abstention from opportunism, Granovetter (1985) pointed out that a standard economic analysis disregards the identity and past interactions of the transactors. Other than purely economic motives, people enter into economic transactions with others based on the experiences of others, but most accurately, from the richly detailed information and trust that they have from personal interactions. Once the overlay of social relations is formed, transactors then have an economic motivation to be trustworthy, so as to not discourage future transactions. The indicator for financial capital was to examine if local and outside financial resources were invested into the Downtown Development program by means of the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan.

Political capital is the willingness of community members to serve on Boards, commissions, and in local government, and is also the use of organization and voice to influence

the distribution of public and private resources, which occurs when community members are persistent, organized, and active. Turner (1999); however, believed that political capital goes beyond voice and economic investment to culminate in self-direction, if an entrepreneurial approach is embraced by those involved in community development. The ability to mobilize financial and social capital is central in developing the power to control the resources that affect the ability of place to become a productive economic and social location; however, “place becomes a central asset in developing political capital” (Turner, 1999: 4). The indicator for political capital was to review if the Leadership Norton County program positively influenced the distribution of capital resources that affect the Downtown Development program.

Social Capital is the actual or potential resources that maintain and reinforce exchanges. Social Capital plays a critical role in creating access to additional resources and can establish new bonding among organizations and communities. The community’s social infrastructure is comprised of interpersonal relationships that bond organizations and communities, and is based on the resources that community members bring to these interactions. In case study research, the community’s social infrastructure must be inferred from social indicators that will emerge from the analysis of field notes (Denzin, 1989; Salamon, 1996). “How these common rural issues are responded to reveals whether the community’s social infrastructure can mobilize consistently, flexibly deal with change, or show commitment to local institutions” (Salamon, 1996: 207). The indicator for social capital was to verify if the establishment of the Entrepreneurship Program created additional capital resources available for use within the Downtown Development program.

Human Capital is knowledge, education, health, interpersonal skills, and the attributes of strength, tenacity, and physical labor. Human capital also includes the ability of each rural community member to work for a living and support their family, and includes their capacity to make a contribution to their community. Dedication to long-term development of human capital tends to increase participation in various community groups and activities. Fey, Bregendahl, and Flora (2006) find that building and sustaining human capital is a pressing need in rural communities. As well, Robison and Flora (2003) imply that the skills or knowledge that compose a person’s human capital may contribute to their ability to exercise power. The indicator for human capital was to evaluate if the contribution of human capital that was made by

the Downtown Restoration Committee positively supported the Downtown Development program.

Cultural Capital is a sense of place, and is the values and symbols reflected in art, history, customs, and material assets. Cultural Capital is also industriousness and optimism, along with the connections that function as a source of social status. As people share a sense of place, cultural capital can also be shared within the community, which Fey, Bregendahl, and Flora (2006) say can be acquired by the preservation of the community's traditions or by simply observing the interactions of others. Cultural capital is in the sense social capital when it is consumed by others, and although investments in cultural capital are difficult to discern and even more difficult to measure, Klamer (2002) asserts that the value cultural capital generates is crucial for the worth of the lives of community members and the communities they live in. Therefore, the power to generate cultural values is not done merely for the generation of profit and income, but is an objective in and of itself. The indicator for cultural capital was to assess if the Historic District Designation, which acts to preserve, improve, and revitalize downtown Norton, has generated new resources for the Downtown Development program.

Natural Capital is essential resources, which consists of renewable and nonrenewable resources, that abide in a particular location and that also shape the cultural capital that is connected to place. Russo (2003: 327) claims that natural capital is an unconventional resource because it is site-specific and can usually be redistributed only with great cost; consequently, "as a wider set of ecological costs are recognized and reflected in prices, the use of natural capital for human consumption will change." Therefore, although natural resources and amenities are easy to notice, it is not always easy to measure or determine the impact that they have on rural community development. The natural capital indicator for the Downtown Development program was to explore if the natural capital resources of downtown Norton were enhanced by the Energy Efficiency program.

Human Subjects Review

The Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB), Human Subjects Research Protocol Application Form was submitted to the University Research Compliance Office (URCO) at Kansas State University (KSU) in Manhattan, Kansas. This dissertation qualified for a waiver of informed consent.

CHAPTER 5 - Norton County, Kansas

For reader clarification, the city of Norton will be delineated solely as Norton or as Norton, Kansas, and the county of Norton, which is home to the cities of Norton, Almena, Lenora, Clayton, and Edmond will be designated as Norton County or Norton County, Kansas.

In the 1870s, when the first settlers traveled to Norton County, they were described as tenacious people that came to this area not only to secure homes, but “came here to fight for a principle as well” (Bowers, 1942: 93). This is the sentiment that continues today and is the underlying directive that defines who the people of Norton County are and is what drives them to make Norton County’s community development programs successful. Darling, Rahman, and Pillarisetti (1994: 67) realized that “if much of the public sector infrastructure is allowed to depreciate dramatically during one period, the community will be forced to confront a difficult task of reinvesting in its capital stock.” Because of the deterioration of the public sector infrastructure in Norton County’s downtown areas, the NCED planned and implemented the Downtown Development program, in order to renovate and renew these areas through the investment in the capital resources held by local community members and outside agencies.

The Early History of Norton County, Kansas

Norton County was originally Native American territory that was occupied in 1541 by the Comanche, Plains, Kiowa, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe tribes, but was claimed for France in 1682, by explorer Robert LaSalle (Bowers, 1942). Although France ceded the area to its Spanish ally in 1763, as compensation for its loss in the French and Indian War, France once again gained control of this area in 1800, when Napoleon pressured Spain to relinquish its control of the territory known as la Louisiane. However, faced with bankruptcy from years of war, Napoleon sold all of the Louisiana territory for three cents per acre in 1803, to President Thomas Jefferson who initially only wanted possession of the port of New Orleans. Although it is not certain who the first white men were to explore the geography, resources, and inhabitants of this new territory, Connelley (1928: 148) contended that in 1843, “John C. Fremont, with a band of

thirty-nine men – consisting of Creoles, Canadian French and Americans, crossed the Smoky Hill, and from this point set out up the Republican.”

Fremont continued up the Republican River and came upon a river located in eastern Norton County that was populated by birds, ash and cottonwood trees, and because there were also populous villages of prairie dogs, Fremont named this river the Prairie Dog (Bowers, 1942). As soon as settlers brought livestock into “God’s great country,” prairie dogs were and have continued to be labeled as “varmints” and have been exterminated to the point that their populations have been decimated throughout the western grasslands (Frazier, 1999: 1). Despite the relatively small impact that prairie dogs impose on ranching operations and the substantial evidence that they are a keystone species that enrich the local ecosystem, they tend to be viewed as a potential economic threat to farmers and ranchers. McCain, Reading, and Miller (2002) argue that prairie dogs, as well as coyotes, gray wolves, bison, bighorn sheep, and elk have fallen victim to the Cowboy Myth. The Cowboy Myth, which can best be understood as the attitude that espouses human dominion over other living beings and is deeply rooted in Christian ethics, is the philosophy that guided European settlement of the West and continues today to guide the way of life for many of Norton County’s residents.

Norton County is located in an area that was once deemed the “Great American Desert”, which was expected to be without timber and was considered to be too far west to be habitable (Lane, 1942[1888]: 53). Even though early settlers to Norton County could take title to a quarter section, providing the settler planted sixteen acres of trees that lived for two years, most trees and many settlers “did not withstand the ravages of wind, drouth and insects” (Bowers, 1942: 88). The wind continues to gust over the rolling hills, across the shortgrass prairie, and through the valleys that surround Prairie Dog Creek, the 160 mile long river that travels through central Norton County. This area that was and continues to be teeming with wildlife and timbered with cottonwood, elm, boxelder, and hackberry was home to the first settlers that arrived during the 1870s.

Settlers that traveled west to homestead around Prairie Dog Creek came into close contact with Sioux, Pawnee, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe tribes. In 1869, William Cody wrote that he came upon a survey party that was being massacred by Indians, which upon seeing him, gave chase. Returning to the area with Major Frank North and three companies of cavalry and two companies of Pawnees, they found “five hundred lodges with more than a thousand warriors,

besides squaws and papooses” (Lockard, 1894: 124). The massacred survey party was given a decent burial; however, many of the Indians were killed and their lodges were destroyed. Although there were several other “bloody battles” in the area that occurred between settlers and bands of Indians, such as the Sioux led by Whistler, Bowers (1942: 3) noted that “the Indians caused no real trouble” during Norton County’s settlement, especially after settlers killed Whistler and two of his chiefs.

By 1870, hunters and trappers such as Ame Cole, settled in eastern Norton County around the Prairie Dog Creek because the abundant beaver, otter, and buffalo, and because of the beauty of the valley. The Cole brothers settled on claims, with George Cole making the first claim in Norton County (Bowers, 1942). At the same time, Daniel McLaren also came to Norton County, and other than the two men in his party, he claimed that it was nearly a year before he saw another white man in the area. McLaren settled in southern Norton County along a river with an abundance of otters, and as with many other rivers that flowed across Norton County and were named for the wildlife, terrain, or early settlers to the area, he named the river Otter Creek (Lockard, 1894). It was not until 1872 that the northwestern corner of the county was settled; it was also at this time that the first women arrived in Norton County with their husbands. These settlers who lived in dugouts often sold buffalo hides for one to one-and-a-half dollars each, in order to buy necessities, such as seed needed to plant corn and wheat (Bowers, 1942).

N.H. Billings also found his way to the Norton area in 1872, and immediately made preparations to organize the county (Lockard, 1894). Billings presented a forged petition for organization of the county, which was so defective that Governor James Harvey refused to act upon it. Because Billings was not the kind of man to become discouraged, he filed a second petition claiming there were 636 inhabitants in the county; however, Lockard (1894: 20) stated “550 never saw Norton county.” Nevertheless, on August 3, 1872 the governor issued the proclamation of organization and named Billingsville the temporary county seat. Previous to this, settlers had already designated 640 acres of land for the county seat, and by unanimous consent rejected calling it Billingsville. Although settlers initially voted to approve Norton as the name and location of their county seat, Bowers (1942) reported that petitioners struggled to relocate the county seat to Leota and continued to present petitions for vote. The County Commissioners, tired of the long struggle, tabled the petition for the last time in July 1878. It is

interesting to note that the petition to relocate Norton as the county seat continues to remain on the Journal as unfinished business.

Settlers to Norton County also struggled with bitter winters, hail storms, drought and grasshoppers. Lockard (1894) reported that in August 1874, myriads of grasshoppers completely destroyed crops for more than 100 miles east, north, and south, and everything west was gone. The total valuation of property returned that year by the assessors was \$24,662.65 and the total tax collected was \$147.97. It was another trying year in 1876, as Norton County's settlers were fighting high water overflowing the banks of Prairie Dog Creek. The bad years were replaced with the good, and due in part to a good crop of wheat and a fair crop of corn, the assessed valuation of property for 1877 was \$90,621.02 and the amount of tax collected was \$496.92. Luck changed again in 1880, when a hail storm spread devastation over much of the entire county and wiped out most of the crops for that year; nevertheless, settlers continued to settle in Norton County and Lockard (1894: 256) claimed that by March 1880 "there were over seven thousand people in the county."

The years of struggle continued; however, by 1890, a great many new buildings were erected and many new businesses were opened. Norton County was now home to many prosperous farmers, ranchers and stockmen, a dairy, mercantile stores, a grocery and meat market, blacksmith and livery stables, a sawmill, lumber yard, dram shop, hotels, barber shops, a lemonade stand, a cigar factory, clothing and shoe companies, a milliner, dressmakers, the Singer Sewing Machine business, carpenters, plasterers, a jewelry store, a photograph business, several banks, law offices, drug stores, real estate offices, several newspapers, a Coronet band, various men's and women's social organizations, and numerous churches that gave spiritual direction from various Christian denominations. Sheriffs and constables were elected to keep the peace, as well as investigate and jail those convicted of the rare case of forgery, rape, incest and murder. Dr. Phoebe Briggs, pioneer physician and surgeon, tirelessly cared for Norton County's settlers from 1873-1884, and was followed by E.M. Edwin Turner, who came to Norton in 1881 and was also Norton's first health officer (Russ, 2005).

Although the early settlers "suffered much" and "sacrificed greatly," Salisbury (1942: 115) remarked that the early settlers "endured nobly." This belief has continued to be true throughout the years for many of Norton County's residents that have suffered from devastating fires. Especially in times of drought, fires have burned crops, scorched the shortgrass prairie,

and razed buildings. Frederick Duvall lost Norton's first hardware store in the 1886 fire, but even without the benefit of insurance, he changed professions and became editor of the *Norton Courier*. When that business was destroyed by fire in 1887, he endured by purchasing a new plant and without missing an issue, became one of the leading weeklies of northwest Kansas. E.V. Peterson's account of the 1886 fire, which burned the frame buildings that housed Norton's early businesses, was "a blessing in disguise" because that ground was soon occupied with "a fine class of business buildings" (1942[1914]: 219). One of these businesses included the First National Bank, which Peterson started 1887 with a safe and \$25,000, in a rented, two-room frame building. The site of the First National Bank, which changed names to the First Security Bank & Trust Company in 1977, still remains today on the north side of Norton's courthouse square.

The History of Norton County's Downtown Development Program

Just as Norton's early settlers prevailed against the devastating fires of 1886 and 1887, the destruction from fire has continued to change the resources held by Norton County's businesses and residents. Devastation from fire was, in a sense, the beginning of Norton's Downtown Development program. Even with the efforts of ten fire departments from Norton and neighboring towns, flames engulfed U.S. 36 Collectables and the Norton Archery Club located at State and Washington streets, on the afternoon of July 25, 2006. Monier (2006b) reported that the fire was so intense that trees and awnings charred, windows cracked, and paint bubbled on several of the businesses located across the street from the fire. Although flames could be seen shooting up from the roof of the archery club, volunteer firemen were able to keep the fire from spreading to other downtown buildings, which included the archery club's taller, two-story neighbor, Pure Prairie Natural Foods. Jim Rowh, owner of Pure Prairie, "could be seen praying for the protection of his store, the other stores and for the people fighting the fire, 'it's all in God's hands', he said" (Monier, 2006b: 5). Even though no one was hurt, Monier (2006b: 5) heard one bystander lamenting that "the landscape of downtown Norton has been changed forever."

City of Norton Fire Chief Mitch Jones echoed the sentiments of the city concerning how the fire would affect the downtown, "when we lose structures like that, when we lose a business, we lose a tax base, a tax paying property owner, sales tax and jobs," he said. "We're losing a

business that can draw people here. It's devastating to the owners, but it's also devastating to the community" (Monier, 2006c: 5). Most small communities do not need a fire or a devastating event to be aware that their downtown is an asset. Until recently, downtown had a negative image; however, downtown has become something that people now want to succeed. The most important trend for a community's downtown has been an improvement in public support, local government attitudes, and developer interest. As well, more outside resources are becoming available through regional and state economic development offices, which result in more improvement programs that aid in revitalizing and managing downtown (Downtown Idea Exchange, 2008a).

Figure 4.1 Fire Stuns Town



SOURCE: Monier, Veronica. 2006a. "Fire Fatal for Two – Flames Consume U.S. 36 Collectables & Norton Archery Club." *Fire Stuns Town*. Personal Collection: July 25, 2006.

A vibrant downtown gives the community, as well as the region, a positive self-image, and a sense of pride. A downtown that is healthy and invigorated preserves an important part of the community's heritage and provides the stability necessary for economic development (Kansas Main Street, 2008). Norton County Economic Development (NCED) held its first meeting in the basement conference room of the Norton City Building on February 23, 2005. During this meeting, NCED Board members and interested community members received advice and direction from the Resource Team, which consisted of various Directors and Project Managers from the Kansas Department of Commerce, Midwest Energy, Hays Workforce, and SER Corporation, concerning what Norton County's focus and goals should be, and how to accomplish these goals. The NCED Board determined that the downtowns, as well as job creation and housing needed to be Norton County's focus for improvement (Monier, 2005b).

One of the goals, which was outlined in the Norton County Economic Development Plan 2005-2010, was to "revitalize all of the downtowns in Norton County" (NCED, 2005: 3). Monier (2005b: 3) stated that the plan to accomplish this goal included,

"Helping existing businesses to thrive, helping those who want to retire find someone to take over their business, finding each town's strengths and capitalizing on them, and improving the appearance of each community's downtown area."

Darling, Rahman, and Pillarisetti (1994) declared that the key role of a community development organization is to measure, monitor, and anticipate changes, and as well have an inclination to intervene. Through strategic planning by the NCED Board and Directors, and with input from Norton County's community members, the Downtown Development program was planned, implemented, and monitored for its success. The Downtown Development program consisted of many programs; however, this dissertation researched the outcome of the Storefront Renewal Project, the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, the Leadership Norton County program, the Entrepreneurship Program, the Downtown Restoration Committee, the Historic District Designation, and the Energy Efficiency Program. Based on the outcome from subsequent strategic planning sessions, interventions that were needed for each program were discussed and put into practice by the Norton County's RCDPs.

The History of Norton County Community Development

Founding of the NCED Board

In order to determine if development worked in Norton County and to discover and comprehend the lessons that were learned by implementing the Downtown Development program, the history of the Norton County's community development must be reviewed. The review was included in this dissertation so that the dynamic and interactive power structures could be realized and understood in the context of who the local community members and outside agencies were that held the built, financial, political, social, human, cultural, and natural capitals needed to successfully facilitate Norton County's community development programs.

An interview with John Miller, Norton County Commissioner, was conducted in order to gather information about who the people were that saw the need for community development in Norton County and what they did to begin the process. Miller stated,

“I started talking about the need for an Economic Development Director in maybe my second term [as Norton County Commissioner]. In the fall of 2002, Carolyn Applegate did it part-time while she was Chamber Director [Economic Development Director], but she left Norton for a job in Goodland. While she was in Norton, she was very good at promoting Norton County and its people and businesses, going so far as to rotate which grocery store and all that she shopped at, including those that were in Lenora and Almena. I believe she also tried to get grants and whatnot for the County and its businesses. When Carolyn left, her leaving left a rather large hole in County economic development.”

Miller continued by saying,

“The Commission discussed hiring a Director for the County, but Dean Kruse [Norton County Commissioner] wanted them just for the County alone. I didn't think that would work, figured out pretty quickly that it wouldn't, so we talked about interviewing someone who could do it [Economic Development Director]. A couple of years later, we started talking about it again more seriously. We got together in late 2004, the County and City started discussion on forming an Economic Development committee. By early 2005, the Commission and the

Council jointly decided it would be a good idea to promote economic development, but that we needed a separate entity.”

Miller remarked that the formation of the NCED Board was “basically a whole bunch of people coming together to see what needed to be done and then to do it. We put it together so that it’s a joint County effort, every community in the County represented.” Miller contacted Clare Gustin, Vice President of Member Services and External Affairs with the Sunflower Electric Power Corporation. Gustin worked with Sunflower Members and the western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance (wKREDA) on economic development projects, and assisted the Members with Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) applications. Although Gustin was unable to attend the NCED’s first meeting, Monier (2005a) noted that she did prepare John Miller, Chair of the Norton County Commissioners, to consider what the vision and strategy of the group would be, how decisions would be made concerning this effort, who would govern the group, and who the partners were that had a vested interest in this effort.

During the first meeting of the NCED Board, Resource Team member Don Ballek asserted that Norton County needed to focus on keeping their existing businesses in town, as 80% of new jobs were created by existing businesses. Ballek also stressed that the NCED Board needed to decide what type of businesses they wanted to bring into Norton County, and needed to determine if these new businesses would be competing against or complimenting existing businesses. Because business recruitment was expensive, the committee needed to decide what kind of incentives they would be willing to provide to recruited businesses, how much of the budget would be going toward business recruitment, and how much of the budget would be spent improving the existing businesses already in Norton County (Monier, 2005a).

Monier, who attended the Norton County Commission meetings, the Norton City Council meetings, NCED Board meetings, as well as EcoDevo 101 (Kansas Department of Commerce Economic Development 101 Course), so that she could report the findings for *The Norton Telegram*, stated in an interview,

“The NCED Board believed that Norton County’s strengths were a good business core that consisted of Rural Telephone, Mil-Tech Corporation, Natoma Corporation, New Age Industrial Corporation, and Norton Correctional Facility.

Other strengths of the County included the schools, Sebelius Reservoir, Elmwood Park, Norton County Hospital, NorthWest Kansas Library System, Prairie Land Electric, the railroad, clean air and water, low crime, open spaces, and a cooperative attitude. Details were worked out, being the county would pay 60 percent and the city would pay 40 percent, Alma and Lenora would pay a yearly membership fee of \$500 and Clayton and Edmond a yearly fee of \$100. Alma, Lenora, Clayton and Edmond would each receive one vote on the committee. The rest of the committee would be made up of two representatives each from the Commission and Council, and then two county at-large representatives and two city at-large representatives.”

At the March 9, 2005 meeting, the NCED Board discussed whether they would be advisory or would have some governing powers, because if they were more than advisory, they would need insurance coverage. Wentz (2005a: 1) recounted in the NCED Board minutes that the vision statement was also discussed and suggestions included “higher paying jobs, stopping in other towns as well as Norton, shop at home, cleaner streets and sidewalks and putting up the welcome flags.” Donna Foley offered her idea for a vision statement, which was approved by the NCED Board and stated, “Norton County Economic Development Board provides leadership to the Economic Development Director in a partnership effort to maintain and improve the quality of life for the citizens of Norton County” (Wentz, 2005a: 1).

In an interview about the early meetings of the NCED, Monier stated, “The newly formed committee took EcoDevo 101 to get an idea of what it was they should be focusing on and came up with downtown, business retention and expansion, housing and labor, and formed a mission statement.” At the March 23, 2005 meeting of the NCED Board, a suggestion for the Board’s Mission Statement was presented by Representative for the City of Lenora Gayle James. Wentz (2005b: 2) wrote that the Mission Statement was adopted, which stated “Norton County Economic Development Board is a countywide partnership dedicated to enhancing the economic strength of the county by recruiting new employers, retaining existing employers, and improving the quality of life for all of Norton County.”

Norton County Attorney Karen Griffiths also presented the NCED Board with requirements for the Interlocal Agreements. Before the Interlocal Agreements could be signed

by all the City Councils in the County, financial support had to be obtained from the City Councils. Wentz (2005b) expressed in the minutes that the NCED Board would also have to draw up guidelines, have the County Commissioners approve the Interlocal Agreement by resolution, and have approval from the Kansas Attorney General. The Interlocal Agreement would be good for 15 years, or for as long as financial support was given by the entities (Wentz, 2006a). The NCED Board continued to work on finalizing the budget, obtaining insurance, finding suitable office space and office equipment, completing the Director's job description, interviewing candidates for the Director's position, and meeting the requirements for the Interlocal Agreement.

Representative from the Norton City Council to the NCED Board Jim Williams discussed the Interlocal Agreement with Norton's City Council. Williams said that it would need to be approved with all the local governments involved, including Norton County, and the cities of Lenora, Alma, Clayton, and Edmond (Monier, 2005c). Williams also commented at the April 6, 2005 Norton City Council meeting that the NCED Board had put together a proposed budget for the remainder of the year, and said that the Norton City Council could commit to 40% of the NCED's budget. Although there was some concern on where the money would come from to finance the NCED, City Administrator Rob Lawson replied that the NCED's budget had previously been discussed, so the money from sales tax revenues could pay for the NCED's 2005 budget; however, there would probably need to be a mill levy for future budgets. The Norton City Council accepted the proposed budget and agreed to pay 40% of the NCED's 2005 budget, which totaled \$66,400.

Although no decision was made at that time on where to house the NCED office, the Board reviewed the preliminary Interlocal Agreement drawn up by County Attorney Karen Griffiths, and approved a job description for the NCED Director position (Monier, 2005d). By May 2005, the NCED had finished the details concerning the job description for the NCED Director, which included the qualifications of a bachelor's degree with courses in business administration, public administration or planning, three years of experience in economic development, grant writing, business management, including one year of administrative experience, or a combination of education and experience, self-motivation and decision-making ability, communication skills, writing and speaking ability, organizational skills, and lots of

energy for a salary of \$45,000 yearly with a single health plan, and reimbursement for economic development business (Monier, 2005e, 2005f).

Several articles in *The Norton Telegram* detailed the search for a NCED Director. The deadline for receiving job applications was July 5, 2005 with eight candidates applying. The NCED Board met to score the candidates according to their job qualifications; however, Eveleigh stated “most of them pretty much wrote their resumes to the job description” (Haynes, 2005: 3). After interviewing the top ranked candidates, the NCED Board signed a contract with Marlene Henderson in October 2005. Originally from around Goodland, Henderson said that she had previously lived in Denver where she ran a public relations firm, lived in Pennsylvania where she worked in radio and television, and in New York where she was the Director of Public Information for the Salvation Army (Plotts, 2006). Henderson also said that she had worked in rural and urban economic development both on the east and west coasts, and in western Kansas. It was reported that experience won her the job (Monier, 2005g).

NCED Programs Managed by Marlene Henderson

Orscheln

Orscheln was one of the NCED’s and Henderson’s first major projects. It was revealed during the discussion held during the NCED Board meeting in February of 2006, that the Norton County Commissioners and Henderson met with representatives from Orscheln. Orscheln is a farm and home store business that planned on building seven new stores. With only two slots remaining open, Norton was courting them in an effort to have them build one of their stores in an area east of the city, which was near the Industrial Park. Orscheln wanted 25,000 sq.ft. of U.S. 36 Highway frontage; however, most of land of that dimension was crop land adjacent or across from the actual Industrial Park. Henderson (2006a, 2006b) disclosed in the Director’s Report that other communities offered Orscheln three and one-half acres of free land, so those communities topped their list. After contacting landowners around the present Industrial Park, five stated they would be willing to discuss either donating or selling their land for this purpose.

During the discussion that was held at the June 2006 NCED Board meeting, Miller stated that he was again in contact with Orscheln. Miller also reported at the September 2006 NCED Board meeting that Orscheln was still interested in coming to Norton; however, Wente (2006b) pointed out that they needed a proposal from the NCED Board that would sell them on building a

store near the Industrial Park. Miller expressed that a group of businessmen were willing to construct a building and lease it to Orscheln, if suitable land were obtained. As well, Wente (2007a) noted that options for land near the Industrial Park were again discussed at the January 2007 meeting. The discussion of having Orscheln build a store in Norton continued throughout 2007 and 2008; however, community members began expressing their concern that inviting Orscheln to Norton would negatively affect locally-owned businesses.

Jake Durham (2008: 5) conveyed community sentiment in his letter to the editor, published in *The Norton Telegram* on July 8, 2008, by writing that outwardly Orscheln seemed like a “complete” store; however, after a walk through Roy’s Sales & Service, or Kowpoke Supply and Lumber “you find that they each have over a half million to a million and a half dollars inventory of the highest quality parts plus capital outlay.” Durham’s editorial continued to mention that Roy’s not only recently added another \$100,000 expansion to his business at his own expense, but that Roy’s also provided complete tractor service and farm equipment repair. As well, Kowpoke had just purchased the former Ace Hardware and Lumber Store, moved to Highway 36, and added a new addition to that building, which when finished would be a complete farm supply store with appliances and hardware. These businesses, as well as other locally owned businesses “took out loans, pay interest, pay their own way and profits made by local businesses stay in Norton, profits made by corporate businesses don’t stay in the local community” (Durham, 2008: 5).

Many of Norton’s community members agreed with Durham’s editorial. June Prout’s letter to the editor, published in *The Norton Telegram* on July 15, 2008 supported the sentiment that Norton was fortunate to have local merchants that could supply us with about anything that was needed and could provide better service, all without going to the County Commissioners demanding that they be supplied with land, buildings, or tax cuts. Prout (2008: 4) asserted that “we must remember that THE backbone of the American economy is the small, local business man, not the big corporate giants. Break the backbone and you have broken our economy.” In reply to the editorials, Becker Stiles who was NCED Director at that time, commented that the effects of Orscheln coming to town were taken very seriously and stated “our primary focus isn’t on recruiting new businesses to Norton, but the retention and expansion of existing businesses and entrepreneurs” (LeRoux, 2008a: 5). Many community members remained in agreement with

Durham (2008: 5) “we have our share of local entrepreneurs. Surely they need local respect and support.”

While he was in the area visiting Phillipsburg, Orscheln’s District Manager Lou Rivard visited Norton on April 10, 2008, and implied that they remained interested in Norton. At the May 13, 2008 meeting, Becker Stiles (2008g) advised the NCED Board that she had been in touch with the local businesses that may be adversely affected by Orscheln building a store in Norton. The general opinion of the local businesses was they were concerned about the large incentives that would be offered to Orscheln. The NCED Board was warned that Roy Skrdlant, owner of Roy’s Sales & Service, would entertain offers rather than have Orscheln in town. In response to local concern, Becker Stiles stated at the May 13, 2008 NCED Board meeting that “actively recruiting competition crosses the line.”

Nevertheless, the Norton County Commissioners directed Becker Stiles to put a proposal together and submit it to Orscheln CFO Bill White, who planned to travel to Norton in June. However, White notified the NCED Board that the trip would be delayed until August, and “he did mention the need for incentives to make opening a store in Norton profitable” (Becker Stiles, 2008j: 3). Norton County Commissioner Leroy Lang encouraged Becker Stiles “to have incentives available to offer Orscheln at their visit;” however, Becker Stiles declared “of course, whether we offer incentives is up to the Economic Development Board, Norton County Commission and the Norton City Council” (2008j: 3). At the July 8, 2008 meeting, NCED Board member Curtis Eveleigh said “it is pretty bold for Orscheln to say they won’t come unless they have incentives. We need criteria for bringing businesses into Norton. We have to be fair to people who are here in Norton.” After all consideration, Orscheln did not build in Norton.

While the Orscheln recruitment was community news from 2006 until 2008, Henderson also made *The Norton Telegram* headlines. On Friday, April 7, 2006 the NCED Board held a special meeting and terminated Henderson as NCED Director. Monier (2006d) reported that Henderson’s contract was subject to a six-month probation period, which within that time the NCED Board could terminate employment without cause or a severance package. Once they came out of the closed session, the NCED Board allowed comments from the public. Concerns that were mentioned included asking the NCED Board if they intended to look for another Director or if they intended to just let it go. To help manage the NCED office until a new Director could be hired, Verla Grysch was employed as a part-time administrative assistant.

Grysch had moved back to Norton with her husband Tony, who had recently purchased the property across from the Norton Theatre to build the Downtown Car Wash.

NCED Programs Managed by Wade Carter

Biodiesel

After six months of recruitment efforts, Wade Carter was hired September 12, 2006 as the NCED Director. The NCED Board met in September of 2006, and during discussion requested that Carter set up a meeting with representatives from companies that build biodiesel plants. One of the concerns that was mentioned in the meeting was the amount of water that was needed to supply a biodiesel plant, as Norton County has an arid climate. Wente commented in the minutes that on December 19, 2006 the NCED Board held a special meeting to discuss biodiesel and decided that a steering committee needed to be established in order to get this started, and by January 2007 the NCED Board had scheduled a conference call with Mike Woolverton from KSU to discuss renewable fuels (2006c; 2007a). However, by the March 2007 NCED Board meeting, Carter reported that the biodiesel market was becoming too unstable, and the consensus from outside agencies was that they didn't want to waste taxpayers' money. He also reported that Goodland had decided not to continue with their plans to build a biodiesel plant and was selling its crusher machine (Wente, 2007b).

Carter was not only immediately busy with the biodiesel issue, he also began attending City Council meetings in Norton, Lenora, Almena, Clayton, and Edmond, and began visiting the businesses located in the Industrial Park to see what their concerns and priorities were. At that time, Natoma Corporation, New Age Industrial Corporation, and the Norton Correctional Facility all stated that they needed employees. Carter also started meeting with various officials from each city in the county concerning housing issues, as it was one of the top three NCED goals. However, Monier (2007a) reported that Norton City Council member Ron Briery voiced concerns about its investment into the NCED budget at the April 11, 2007 meeting. Briery questioned why the NCED was no longer trying to get a biodiesel plant to come to Norton, yet was focusing on housing when they weren't doing anything to bring people in to Norton. Norton City Council member Donna Foley, who was also a NCED Board member told Briery to come to the next NCED meeting to share his opinion and to see what they were doing. However, the

NCED Board determined that biodiesel would not be a good match for Norton County and decided to focus on Norton County's housing, labor, and downtown issues (Wente, 2007c).

Housing

The NCED Board directed Carter to focus on Norton County's housing concerns. During the May 2007 meeting, Carter informed the NCED Board that he had made numerous conference calls with the USDA regarding their 538 Housing program. Although he was not impressed by this program because of its stipulations, Carter (2007) notified the NCED Board that the USDA would be coming to Norton to discuss the 538 Loan Program, as well as the Guaranteed Loan Program. The meeting would consist of two sessions, one for lenders and the other for property owners interested in renovating their rental property. Carter also reported at this meeting that he had been in contact with Charles Buki of CCB to do a housing and employment study for Norton County. While a Docking Institute housing survey would cost around \$15,000, the cost for both studies from CCB ranged from \$16,000 to \$24,000, which included 80 hours of hands on time in Norton, and was similar to what Docking could offer. However, Buki was not certain if their survey would meet USDA guidelines for funding subsidies. Carter (Wente, 2007d) also implied that he would be attending a meeting later in the month with the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission. The intent of this meeting was to address housing issues in northwest Kansas, which would then be presented at the Kansas Legislature during their next session.

Carter reported at the June 2007 NCED Board meeting that the Business Retention and Expansion Survey (BREES) was another possibility for Norton County. The BREES survey would be free because it uses local volunteer help that has been trained to administer the lengthy survey. The consensus of the NCED Board was to have Carter compare all the surveys so that they could see which one would most benefit Norton County. Carter also notified the NCED Board that the USDA planned to make a presentation on their loan programs to local bankers in the morning and then to the general public in the afternoon on July 12th, the Docking Institute was scheduled to make a presentation concerning the surveys they could conduct for Norton County on July 19th, and CCB would make a presentation about their housing and employment surveys on August 16th. Carter started addressing Norton County's housing issues; however, Becker Stiles continued examining various programs that were available and expanded Norton County's housing program during her tenure as NCED Director.

Open Air Market

Although Carter's main focus had been housing, he also was involved with the Norton Downtown Open Air Market. After sending letters to area businesses and vendors, plans for the Open Air Market was discussed May 2007 in an open meeting held at the Library Community Room; this information was then presented to the NCED Board in their July 2007 meeting. Prior to having the Open Air Market in downtown Norton, its predecessor the Farmer's Market was held in Elmwood Park. The goal of the Open Air Market was to get people to come downtown one night per month. The NCED Board approved financial assistance that was not to exceed \$800 for expenditures on banners and advertising on Channel Six, in the Shopping Mart and *The Norton Telegram*. Christina Files was elected market manager for the first Open Air Market that was held July 12, 2007.

The Norton Downtown Open Air Market was a collaboration between producers associated with the original Farmer's Market, and local producers of handcrafted products, local businesses, and downtown businesses. Those who were allowed to sell goods were growers, producers, or businesses who resided in the counties of Norton, Phillips, Rooks, Graham, Sheridan, Decatur, Red Willow, Furnas and Harlan. Growers from outside this area needed to get clearance from the market manager prior to offering items for sale, and non-producers were not allowed to sell unless specifically approved by the market manager. Pursuant to the interpretation of the Norton City Code by the Norton City Attorney, the Open Air Committee had been given the authority to set guidelines for the Norton Downtown Open Air Market. No license or fee was required; however, participants had to register prior to the event. There was no peddling allowed, and Sales Tax had to be paid on all purchases (Norton Downtown Open Air Market Committee, 2007).

The objectives were to encourage the local production of fresh produce and baked goods, encourage consumers to seek out and purchase local produce and baked goods, encourage shoppers to think and buy locally, increase the knowledge and support of local businesses, and increase the foot traffic throughout downtown Norton. This partnership was also expected to result in an increased revenue for all involved parties (Norton Downtown Open Air Market Committee, 2007). While the Open Air Market was somewhat successful in its first year, local producers of handcrafted products, local businesses, and downtown businesses did not organize

for a second year. However, the producers associated with the original Farmer's Market returned to Elmwood Park the following year and have continued to follow this tradition since that time.

NCED Programs Managed by Diane Becker Stiles

Carter had been the NCED Director for about a year when he was accepted into law school. Before Carter left his position as NCED Director, Monier said in an interview that “Diane Becker interned with him [now married and will be referred to as Becker Stiles] and upon his leaving, they hired her conditionally as the Director.” Becker Stiles became NCED Director on August 15, 2007. After she graduated from Fort Hays State University (FHSU), she spent the summer as an intern working with the previous Director, Wade Carter. Becker Stiles was raised on a farm between Norton and Lenora, and attended Lenora High School until it closed in 2001. After Becker Stiles graduated from Jennings High School in 2002, she attended FHSU and majored in political science, and received a certificate in philosophy of public life. In consideration of her job as NCED Director, Becker Stiles said that “the thing that helped me the most was being an intern and having a heads up on the projects in the office” (Bradley, 2010a: 7).

Miller stated in an interview as for the why of economic development in Norton County, “We needed to bring people together in the community, and I always speak of the community, not the county, to make sure our community doesn't die and stagnate, to make sure it's on top. We knew that as elected officials we didn't have time to be the one to bring everything together and we knew we needed someone to do that, who could also get along with everybody, which most elected officials can't. We all knew we needed somebody to take the time and then do it, who could coordinate it. Diane is great. She is truly interested in our community and doesn't know what 40 hours a week is. I like to refer to her as a 'home grown product.' She is someone who really cares about what happens in Norton County.”

Housing Assessment

Housing was a priority to the NCED Board during Becker Stiles term as NCED Director. Becker Stiles was part of the development of several housing programs that saw significant progress toward accomplishing the NCED's original goals to “find funding to help with

revitalizing housing, demo housing, and build new housing on existing locations” (NCED, 2005). One of the first projects that Becker Stiles worked on was a housing needs assessment. The Kansas Rural Housing Incentive District Act was signed into law in order to encourage housing development in rural cities and counties where housing shortages exist, by authorizing tax increment financing for public improvements in support of housing development. Before utilizing this incentive, it was required that the governing body of the city or county conduct a housing needs analysis. After completion of the housing needs analysis, the Secretary of the Department of Commerce would certify that the findings and determinations of the housing needs analysis justified the use of this incentive (Weatherford, 1998).

Becker Stiles (2007b) reported that many state housing programs, including the Rural Housing Incentive District program, required a housing needs analysis. The new housing assessment proposal would expand the current survey to include all information required by the housing needs analysis. Although the results would be useful, Becker Stiles (2008c) later acknowledged that the NCED Board decided that a housing assessment would not be the best use of their funding; therefore, unless a grant application required the assessment, the project would remain on hold. The NCED Board felt that they had a good idea of Norton County’s housing challenges, and decided that these challenges could best be addressed by meeting with the Norton County Housing Solutions task force.

Norton County Housing Solutions Task Force

Based on the assumption that social harmony is a result of community consensus and homogeneity, the ideal image of well-kept single-family homes is often viewed as the key element of thriving small towns. The desire of many small rural Midwest communities to promote growth and economic development, while maintaining their rural character, is a powerful force in shaping rural policy. However, changes in the rural economy present numerous challenges to small rural communities. In an effort to maintain their rural character, communities may adopt policies that foster higher housing costs and have the unintended effect of restricting economic development. Because political decisions are frequently made by those who are inclined to maintain the status quo, conflicts may occur over the provision of affordable housing when local policies fail to meet the emerging needs of the community. Therefore, in order to successfully address their housing needs, rural communities must take proactive steps to initiate consensus building and facilitate public involvement (Ziebarth, 2000).

To initiate consensus building on the housing issue, and to gain a more accurate view of the housing situation in Norton County, the NCED hosted a meeting on September 30, 2008. Becker Stiles (2008m: 5) stated,

“The Norton County Housing Solutions meeting was quite successful. The importance of the housing issue was evidenced by the number in attendance and the active participation of each who attended. The NCED plans to set up a task force, which would help accomplish the goals that were identified. These goals include providing affordable rental housing and accessing resources that are available for properties in disrepair (demolition of properties in disrepair to open up lots for building), and increasing the number of homes in the \$50,000 to \$90,000 range.”

Demolition Program

Housing and community development partnership projects have two kinds of results, direct and tangible effects that can be measured, such as the amount of space developed, and indirect effects, such as changes in the investment potential of a neighborhood. An important issue in evaluating housing or community development projects is the need to which the project is responding (Riggin, Grasso, Westcott, 1992). The magnitude of the need focuses on the size and distribution of housing, and includes indicators such as the availability, affordability, and quality of local housing. Magnitude also focuses on community development problems, and includes indicators that measure the extent of economic and physical distress experienced by the community (Riggin, Grasso, Westcott, 1992). Indicators of duplication include the extent to which the partnership project duplicates or substitutes other resources, and can be accessed by compiling a resource inventory that identifies the accessibility, capacity, and continuity of other projects that are already in place with the same or related purposes (McKillip, 1987).

Some of the older homes in disrepair were a health and safety concern in the Norton County communities; therefore, it was proposed that the cities in Norton County would benefit from an official demolition program or policy. The plan proposed that NCED offer \$2000 each to Almena, Clayton, Edmond, Lenora, Norton and rural Norton County to implement demolition plans that best fit their needs. The effectiveness of the demolition plan was furthered by the county agreement to accept waste from up to six houses per year at half of the regular landfill fees (Becker Stiles, 2008g). Jeff Wolf was hired as the Norton City Code Inspector, which was

essential in facilitating necessary demolition projects. Wolf created a list of properties that qualified for the demolition program. However, if it was possible to salvage the property scheduled for demolition, information on these properties would be given to people who are interested in purchasing, rehabilitating, and selling the homes. Becker Stiles (2008c) also noted that the 2009 goal was to distribute the entire \$12,000 allotted for the demolition projects that have the greatest impact on the local communities.

Homeowner Rehabilitation Program

The Homeowner Rehabilitation Program, which is funded through the federal HOME Investment Partnerships Program, assists communities with repairing and rehabilitating owner-occupied homes. Local Kansas communities, outside the federal HOME entitlement communities of Wichita, Topeka, Lawrence, Kansas City, and Johnson County, may apply for program funds up to \$300,000 for administering a homeowner rehabilitation program in their community. Grant funds pass through the local Kansas communities on a reimbursement basis; assistance is then provided to the homeowner in the form of a loan. The entire residential property must be rehabilitated to pass Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and KHRC's HQS Variances, and must be repaired in accordance with building codes (KHRC, 2006).

Norton City Administrator Rob Lawson, Norton City Code Inspector Jeff Wolfe, Amy Griffey with Northwest Kansas Planning and Development, and NCED Director Becker Stiles met and agreed to apply for the HOME Homeowner Rehabilitation Program instead of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program because the CDBG required a target area. An informational meeting on the HOME Homeowner Rehabilitation Program was hosted by the group at the NCED office on April 21, 2009. Becker Stiles (2009f: 6) stated,

“We have been trying to get the information out to the public about the program. We have disbursed many pre-applications, but only received three back thus far. In order to have a strong application for these grant funds, we need about fifty pre-applications. The pre-application does not commit them to the program, it just indicates their interest. Likewise, there is no guarantee of funding.”

Applications were taken to various businesses that employed minimum wage personnel, and after explaining the benefits of the program to these homeowners, there were only five pre-applications that were returned for the Homeowner Rehabilitation Program. Becker Stiles (2009g: 6) pointed out that “to be competitive, there needed to be at least fifty pre-applications. This low

response rate suggests that Norton residents are not interested in the program.” Unfortunately, because of the low response rate, Norton City Administrator Rob Lawson made the decision not to apply for the Homeowner Rehabilitation Program.

Paint the Town Program

Becker Stiles (2007b) suggested that until the HOME program could be implemented, one proposed rehabilitation program that could be accomplished is the homeowner paint assistance program. Exterior paint for houses was provided to homeowners meeting certain requirements. Becker Stiles (2008e: 2) stated in the February 2009 Director’s Report,

“The City of Norton passed a home owner paint assistance program that provides the paint to families with incomes that do not exceed 80% of the median income. Jeff Wolf did a wonderful job analyzing and deciding the details of the program. I think it will be a tremendous benefit to Norton and any other community willing to adopt a similar program.”

The City of Norton has continuously offered its Paint the Town program since 2008, and it has proven to be a successful program. Eligible homeowners must show proof of income, proof of residency, verification of home ownership, and must be responsible for the labor to paint their home. The Paint the Town program runs from April 1 to September 15, and encourages eligible homeowners to apply for a voucher worth \$250 for paint, which can be used for the exterior of their residence. The paint can be purchased at local stores. If the homeowners do not paint their homes within six months, they are required to return the money or it will be assessed to their taxes.

Rental Property Owners Meeting

In the “2003 Progress Report,” Randall Hrabe (2003: 10), Executive Director of Northwest Kansas Planning & Development Commission (NWKP&DC) stated,

“There is a severe lack of affordable quality housing in northwest Kansas. The pure economics of low real estate values have restricted the new housing developments for almost twenty years. Many jobs created within the last several years have had difficulty finding the labor to fill these jobs because of lack of available housing in the 75 northwest Kansas communities. This weakness is attributed to the fact that real estate values are so far below the cost of new

construction, that it is uneconomical for developers to construct new housing in the region. Housing construction that is being done, mainly in the larger towns, is the upper class housing. The reason for this is that they are the only ones who can afford to build and the fact that the limited number of contractors make a larger profit on the expensive homes versus the lower income affordable homes. This general lack of housing is also manifested in a lack of housing rentals throughout the region.”

Becker Stiles (2009h: 7) conveyed that she was “pleased with the candid discussion and outcomes of the rental property owners meeting. The group gave many great suggestions as an alternative to the rental licensing program.” Becker Stiles condensed the recommendations into six objectives, which included the steps needed to achieve them. The Recommendations to Improve the Quality and Quantity of Rental Housing in Norton County is described below.

1. Create a blog for the rental property owners to communicate.
2. Form an organization of rental owners.
3. Develop a voluntary inspection program.
4. Explore the creation of a certification program to validate the quality of rental properties to prospective tenants.
5. Produce a guide for both rental owners and tenants.
6. List rental properties available on <http://www.discovernorton.com>.

Housing Incentives

To better understand the housing market in Norton, Becker Stiles (2009l: 9) “obtained a copy of the housing study completed in 1999 before the Northridge Acres apartment complex was built. I am in the process of updating the information according to Census estimates. This will be an important tool in attracting housing development in Norton.” This issue was also addressed by current NCED Executive Director Scott Sproul (2010: 3), who informed the NCED Board that “some housing incentives such as free land or discounted tax sale lots may be presented in a Norton County or City of Norton incentive plan. Other Norton County cities could utilize these incentives if approved with elected city officials. This housing incentive needs to be researched further.” Sproul contacted the Department of Commerce to obtain information on the programs that were available for privately-owned housing development. Programs that have been implemented continue to be evaluated for their effectiveness during

NCED Board meetings and at the Strategic Planning session; therefore, the housing issues of Norton County remain a high priority for the NCED Board and Executive Director.

Norton County's Economic Development Strategic Plan

Strategic planning is a dynamic process by which businesses identify their future opportunities so that they can benefit from their strengths, experience growth, and acquire resources. A genuine commitment to strategic planning requires a measure of strategic thinking that is committed to paper, which results in a meaningful change in the behavior of the business. The objectives of the strategic plan are to promote change within the business that also allows for external change; however, many businesses often resist change and are critical of strategic planning. Failure of the strategic plan is often a result of being expensive to implement, remaining difficult to put into practice, lacking involvement and participation from business managers, or stemming from complications among those who were responsible for implementing the process (Reid, 1989).

Commitment to strategic planning is essential. As well, consistent effort must be maintained in implementing the plan during good and bad times; therefore, management must be responsible for directing the continuous participation of those involved in the process. Businesses that seek advice from management consultants, government bodies, trade associations, or business schools are more likely to build a successful strategic plan. As well, businesses owners and managers that are committed to achieving long-term goals and have a financial interest in the business are more apt to be committed to implementing the process. A successful strategic plan translates business goals into operational terms that are measurable, builds commitment among a network of participants, and constructs an innovative climate that attempts to provide businesses with a secure future (Reid, 1989).

Becker gave a power point presentation of the Strategic Plan that she began compiling for 2008, which included the three original goals of downtown development, job creation, and housing, which were expanded to include additional, correlating goals. Becker Stiles (2008a: 1) stated in the “Norton City/County Economic Development Progress Evaluation for 2008 Strategic Plan”,

“In 2004, a group of eleven members of the Norton County Economic Development Board and seven community members met for a strategic planning session led by the Kansas Department of Commerce. Three primary areas of

interest emerged from this session: job creation, downtown development, and housing. In the few short years since creating the 2005-2010 Strategic Plan for economic development in Norton County, remarkable progress has been made towards these goals. As we approach 2008, it is important to evaluate what has been accomplished so far and create a plan to continue the achieving these goals during the upcoming year.”

The NCED Board and Becker Stiles again reviewed Norton County’s Economic Development Strategic Plan at their November 2009 meeting. Each of the programs that had been offered were reviewed in order to determine whether they should be continued, revised, or discontinued in 2010. Business in the Spotlight and the Business Directory projects were continued without revision. It was decided that the programs to be discontinued were Buy Local Day, the Donation Request Program, and the Demolition Assistance Program. The Demolition Program would be again discussed when the budget was discussed for 2011. The programs that the NCED Board continued with revision were the Business Education Scholarship and the Storefront Renewal Project. With the resignation of Becker Stiles, the NCED Board directed Sproul to set clear goals and develop reasonable expectations of the community development programs that would continue to benefit all of Norton County’s communities.

CHAPTER 6 - Research Findings

Built Capital – Storefront Renewal Project

Many locally-owned businesses that once existed in the “Main Street shopping districts” have been replaced by “big box retail corporations,” which Blanchard and Matthews (2006: 2242) warn are managed by absentee-owned firms that direct both the wholesale distribution and retail sale of products, and thus, affect the power structure of the community. “The power structure of the community was conceptualized as a function of the concentration of economic activity,” and as a result, is related to the socioeconomic welfare and problem-solving capacity of the community (Blanchard and Matthews, 2006: 2242). Immediately after World War II, researchers focused on understanding how the transition from small-scale to large-scale production influenced the community’s power structure and problem-solving capacity. Mills and Ulmer (1946) noticed that the interests of independent middle-class small business owners generally matched those of the community, and as a result, this group ensured that local resources served the local well-being. As well, these local small business owners were an important part of the problem-solving capacity of the community because they recognized that improvements to the community typically benefitted their businesses.

Young and Lyson (1993) contended that the problem-solving capacity of small business owners acts as a buffer between local well-being and the economic environment. As well, researchers (Galskiewicz, 1985; Besser, 2003) have shown that small business owners participate in their community’s affairs in ways that are consistent with their personal values and their sense of responsibility to the community. These contributions to the community not only improve the economic opportunities for the small business owner and stimulate good public relations, but most importantly, they improve the community. Furthermore, Putnam (1993) implied that norms of reciprocity and trust are created by the sharing of resources among businesses. Blanchard and Matthews (2006: 2245) propose that social trust is enhanced by the presence of independent middle-class small business owners; therefore, although there are multiple methods that could be used to revitalize a downtown shopping district, in competitive small business environments the variety of choices that drive local problem-solving are normally locally directed in nature, so that

“regardless of which method is chosen, the community and local businesses benefit from these efforts.”

Blanchard and Matthews claim that “local interests seek a common goal” (2006: 2246). A common goal of the NCED, downtown building owners and businesses, as well as many community members was the renovation and renewal of the downtown storefronts. In 2008, the NCED Board began looking at a program to help improve the appearance of business storefronts in Norton County. During that time, Becker Stiles discussed the program with business owners to gauge community interest. The NCED Board appointed a four-member NCED downtown committee, which met in June 2008 to review the Storefront Renewal Project and then made recommendations concerning the program to the NCED Board. Becker Stiles indicated that interest had been expressed in the Storefront Renewal Project and believed that it would be a popular program, which would benefit all of Norton County. It was determined that the Storefront Renewal Project would begin January 1, 2009 and would be financed through the NCED’s Capital Outlay fund. As well, Becker Stiles (2008l: 2-3) stated,

“To supplement the Storefront Renewal Project, I proposed a loan program to Norton Development Corporation. The loans would be low interest with a limit of around \$4,000. This would allow business owners to take on larger projects without having to provide the money upfront. Norton Development Corporation is currently considering the proposed program.”

The NCED created the Storefront Renewal Project to beautify and renew the business districts of Norton County, with the intention of promoting further business development and reinvigorating community pride. Although this program focused on the built capital resources of Norton County, the use of NCED financial capital to fund built capital improvements to the storefronts of local businesses also enhanced Norton County’s social and cultural capital resources through the expenditure of time and energy to renew the downtown’s cultural goods. The NCED (2009) planned to fund projects in all of Norton County’s communities and gave preference to those projects in the central business districts, which were compatible with the vision of the community. The Storefront Renewal Project grants were available to all for-profit businesses in Norton County, which had consistent business hours appropriate to that type of business. Each business could apply for up to \$1000; however, the amount had to be matched

dollar for dollar. Eligible costs included, but were not limited to painting, surface covering, brickwork, window or door repair or replacement, new or refurbished signage, sidewalk amenities. It was intended that local materials and contract labor services would be used for the projects, and that City ordinance requirements would be met.

“The public may not want all of the details, but they need to know how it will affect them and who will benefit the most from any specific project” (Erickson, 1996: 3). In order to get the details of how the Storefront Renewal Project would benefit building owners, thirteen people attended a workshop on this specific project, which was held February 26, 2009 in the NCED office. Becker Stiles (2009d: 5) also had the opportunity to discuss the program with business owners while she was delivering posters for the Buy Local Week program, and stated that

“many business owners are excited about the program and are putting applications together. We have received three applications to date and expect many more. I believe the timing of the project could not be better. In a struggling economy, changes to storefronts will have a positive effect on our community perception.”

Eighteen applications for project renovations that business owners planned on completing were received by the March 31, 2009 deadline. Becker Stiles (2009e) disclosed in the April 2009 Director’s Report that she had created a ranking system for the applications based on NCED goals and objectives for the program. The NCED downtown committee met on April 8, 2009 to review the applications, and made recommendations that the NCED Board fund fifteen of the eighteen projects.

James (2009a) remarked in the April 14, 2009 NCED Board minutes that the NCED downtown committee planned to interview the three remaining applicants that had not initially been approved. Bozie’s Barber Shop and Norton Sports Center provided the NCED downtown committee with further information about their applications, and those projects were approved; however, one application could not be approved. Erickson (1996: 3) declared that the “internal dynamics of power and communication set up the decision making framework.” The NCED downtown committee completed their decision-making after receiving further communication from the three applicants about their projects, and then provided the NCED Board with funding recommendations at the May 2009 meeting. Seventeen of the eighteen applications were approved for the 2009 Storefront Renewal Project, which totaled \$13,620.69 in grants awarded towards \$41,840.76 of projects that would beautify and renew building exteriors. Becker Stiles

(2009e: 5) emphasized that “this program has the capacity to leverage a substantial amount of investment in existing businesses.”

Figure 6.1 Storefront Renewal Project-2009: Monier Building-Kansas Street



SOURCE: Monier, Janis. 2010. “Northwest Kansas Twister.” *Storefront Renewal Project-2009: Monier Building-Kansas Street*. Personal Photograph: March 30, 2010.

Becker Stiles commented to the NCED Board at the June 2009 meeting that she had created a project completion report for each project and was working to design marketing materials that highlighted the improvements made by the Storefront Renewal Project. Fifteen of the seventeen projects were completed by the October 31, 2009 deadline; however, due to unforeseen circumstances, extensions were granted to two projects (Becker Stiles, 2009m). Erickson (1996: 4) claimed that “understanding the power system in a community can result in more completed projects with less controversy. Working with the structure will provide more success in any community development effort.” Both these projects were successfully

completed in 2010, and added to Norton County’s community development effort. Becker Stiles confirmed that because of the positive feedback from the community and the effectiveness of the program for Norton County building and business owners, the NCED decided to hold the program again in 2010 (James, 2010a: 1).

Table 6.1 Storefront Renewal Projects and Grants Awarded-2009

2009 Storefront Renewal	Project	\$Total Cost	\$Total Grant
Boxler Insurance Agency	New Awning	4160.00	1000.00
Bozie’s Barber Shop	Paint	741.00	370.50
Bridges Group Inc. and Mark Klein, DDS	Replacement Exterior Wood Siding - Two Storefront Areas of the Building	5029.58	1000.00
City of Clayton	New Welcome Sign	735.00	367.50
City of Clayton	New Windows	2314.00	1000.00
Engel’s Sales & Service Center	Three New Signs	2168.00	1000.00
Garrett Plumbing, Heating, Electric	New Door, Paint	1193.00	596.50
Here’s Your Sign, LLC	Planters, Mailbox, Paint	982.95	491.48
Monier Building-Kansas Street	Mosaic Tile on Building Face, Paint	6042.18	1000.00
Mortensen’s Computer Service	New Front Door, Paint	2268.00	1000.00
Norton Coin Laundry	New Windows, Siding, Awning	3239.29	1000.00
Norton Glass Company	New Windows	1589.41	794.71
Norton Sports Center	Two New Signs, Windows	3710.00	1000.00
Security Abstract Company	New Awning	3220.00	1000.00
Sloan’s Plumbing, Inc.	New Sign, New Garage Door, Paint	2421.31	1000.00
The Razor’s Edge	New Door, New Windows	2027.04	1000.00
		\$ 41,840.76	\$ 13,620.69

Molm and Cook (1995) implied that over time, exchanges recur with the same partners. After a successful response from business owners and positive comments from community members in 2009, the NCED Board partnered with building owners wanting to renew and beautify their buildings and offered the Storefront Renewal Project again in 2010, with a few minor adjustments. The NCED Board approved the 2010 Storefront Renewal Project Application at their December 2009 meeting and funded a maximum of \$15,000 for the program through the Capital Outlay fund. The NCED received fifteen applications worth \$27,544.61 in project renovations before the application deadline, which was set for March 31, 2010. The NCED downtown committee approved eleven of the applications and made recommendations to the NCED Board to fund the projects from the Almena Community Center, City of Lenora, eleven, Hair Envy, Kowpoke Supply, and Rocking W Trailer Sales.

Because of the NCED’s desire to promote energy efficiency, the project from J&R Liquor was approved with the recommendation that tinted glass be used for the new windows.

The projects submitted by O'Brien's Pit Stop, Chanda's Dance Illusions, State Farm Insurance, and Craig L. Krezik, DDS were approved with the committee strongly encouraging compliance with the standards of the Kansas Historical Society to support the historic district nomination. Becker Stiles (2010d) confirmed in the April 2010 Director's Report that three applications were initially denied, including the application from End Zone Sporting Goods that was not approved based on inability to meet the application deadline. However, Emerson (1972a, 1972b) recognized that people are dependent on one another for valued outcomes. Therefore, the NCED downtown committee decided to reconsider the application in the second round. Becker Stiles (2010e: 4-5) stated in the May 2010 NCED Director's Report,

“we received four applications for the second round of the 2010 Storefront Renewal Project. All applications fit the guidelines for the Storefront Renewal Project and we have \$4,000 remaining from the initial allocation. The committee recommends funding the four additional projects.”

Table 6.2 Storefront Renewal Projects and Grants Awarded-2010

2010 Storefront Renewal	Project	\$Total Cost	\$Total Grant
Almena Community Center	New Signage	2000.00	Extension Requested
City of Lenora	Move, Reframe, Add New Base to Welcome Sign, Pergola, Spruce Tree	2000.00	1000.00
Craig L. Krezek, DDS	New Door, New Windows	3520.11	1000.00
el leven	Awnings, Flower Boxes	2699.98	1000.00
Endzone Sports & Office Supply	New Gutters, Paint	1108.75	554.38
First Security Bank & Trust	Restore Existing Awning	2084.36	1000.00
Garden Gate Florals, Etc.	New Awning, Repairs Made Related to Moving Sign	1975.00	Extension Requested
Hair Envy	New Awning	634.10	317.05
J & R Liquor	New Windows	3786.84	1000.00
Lalich Enterprises-Old Dollar General Store	Remove Old Sign, Replace Old Aluminum Facing	2500.00	Extension Requested
Kowpoke Supply & Lumber	New Awning	3066.67	1000.00
O'Brien's Pit Stop	New Door	1618.49	809.25
Rocking W Trailer Sales	New Fence	550.31	275.16
		\$ 27,544.61	\$ 7,955.84

The four additional projects that were funded included End Zone, which submitted an application for a \$1000 grant to paint the exterior of their building and install new gutters. First Security Bank and Trust applied for a \$1,000 grant to restore the awning over their drive-through window. Garden Gate Floral submitted an application for a \$987.50 grant to repair the exterior

of their building, associated with moving their sign, and for the cost of a new awning. Lulich Enterprises, who owned the old Dollar General building in downtown Norton, requested a \$1,000 grant to remove the tin from the front of their building, in an effort to comply with the standards of the historic district nomination for downtown Norton. Verla Grysch, NCED Administrative Assistant, commented in an interview about the 2010 Storefront Renewal Project that ten projects were completed in 2010, two projects were not pursued and were closed, and three projects were granted extensions.

In an interview with current NCED Executive Director Scott Sproul concerning the Storefront Renewal Project, he acknowledged that the program had been very successful; however, in consideration of budget concerns, the NCED Board decided not to fund the program for 2011. Erickson (1996: 4) believed that projects can be successfully completed; however, this depends on the “amount of strategic planning that has been done and the involvement of the decision makers.” The Storefront Renewal Project, along with other programs that seek to improve the downtown areas, promote business development, and renew Norton County’s communities will continue to be evaluated through the NCED’s Strategic Planning process for their ability to develop Norton County’s community capitals.

Community members who have the power to problem-solve and make decisions are knowledgeable about what will and will not work within their community. Becker Stiles conveyed that “businesses benefit from making their appearances more attractive, but many projects get put off due to cost” (Bradley, 2009a: 5). Erickson (1996: 1) contended that power relates to people who have the ability or official capacity “to make decisions and exercise control over others.” Community decision makers know who holds the political, social, and financial capitals of the community. As well, the community’s decision makers know what needs to be done, who should do it, and are able to effectively communicate these decisions (Erickson, 1996).

The decision to implement the Storefront Renewal Project was an important program that not only began the revitalization of Norton County’s buildings, it also helped to mobilize Norton County’s capital resources. Although some communities rehabilitate buildings without developing a plan for how the building will be used, the Downtown Idea Exchange (2008b) implies that a plan, which restores the viability to a downtown district by employing strategies that energize economic activity, focuses not on the buildings, but on the destination marketing

and business retention. “Retention has everything to do with doing things to support the businesses that are already in downtown. We should try to say, We are Main Street, and this is what we have to offer” (Downtown Idea Exchange, 2008b: 4).

Financial Capital – Neighborhood Revitalization Plan

Communities in which the residents have a progressive image are more likely to have the most contentment at the community level; therefore, they are the ones most likely to adopt innovations. Community image is contentment with the community that “is derived from a predominantly held positive image of the quality of life in the community” (Borich and Korsching, 1990: 8). This is acquired not only through an internal sense of community, but also from comparisons with other communities and the relationships that these communities have with each other (Borich and Korsching, 1990). However, Whitener and Parker (2007) indicate that not only do these communities’ economic and development programs vary widely from each other, the low-density settlement patterns often make it more costly for rural communities to provide critical services, so as a result, the opportunities and resources that are available to rural communities also vary widely.

No level of good intentions will be sufficient, if adequate resources are not available (Weinberg, 2000). Therefore, in order to have community development programs that are successful and so that residents have a positive image of their community, adequate financial resources must be sought from outside the community, as well as from inside the community. The Neighborhood Revitalization Act was one source of financial capital that was available to Norton County communities that came from outside resources. The Housing Act of 1949 first authorized federal assistance of redevelopment activities in blighted areas of communities, which focused on clearance activities. However, with the passage of the Housing and Community Act of 1974, the focus progressed to revitalization, and the law was amended to include rehabilitation and reconditioning (HCD, 2010).

Former Kansas Attorney General Carla Stovall (1996) wrote that the Neighborhood Revitalization Act asserts that the governing body of any municipality may designate a neighborhood revitalization area within that municipality, if the governing body finds that one or more of the described conditions exist and that the rehabilitation, conservation or development of the area is necessary to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the

municipality. A neighborhood revitalization area is defined as an area of dilapidation, deterioration, or obsolescence that endangers life or property through fire or other causes, and which constitutes an economic or social liability in its present condition.

Stovall (1996) continued to say that a neighborhood revitalization area is also considered to be an area of buildings, which through age, architecture, history, or significance, should be either preserved or restored to productive use. The Neighborhood Revitalization Act is designed to encourage property owners, through the use of property tax rebates, to improve their properties that are located in the blighted areas of municipalities. The Neighborhood Revitalization Act allows rebates to be made only to the taxpayer that made the improvements to their property, not to subsequent owners of the property. Stovall (1996: 3) stated,

“Any increment in ad valorem property taxes levied by the municipality resulting from improvements by a taxpayer to property in a revitalization area may be credited to the fund for the purpose of returning all or part of the property increment to the taxpayer in the form of a rebate.”

In regards to the Downtown Development program, the area designated for revitalization and investment of financial capital refers to Norton’s downtown area, rather than to a Norton County residential neighborhood.

Beginning in April 2007, former NCED Director Wade Carter was instructed by the NCED Board to collect information on housing programs. As a result, Carter obtained information on the Neighborhood Revitalization Act, and details of what had been researched began to be discussed at subsequent NCED Board meetings. The NCED Board met on June 12, 2007 in Clayton to initiate group discussion on the Neighborhood Revitalization Act. Norton County Appraiser Alan Hale also attended the meeting and said that he had received emails from other counties that had the Neighborhood Revitalization Act in place. Hale reported that there were fifty-three Kansas counties that had adopted the Neighborhood Revitalization Act, with four in northwest Kansas, including Russell, Ellis, Logan, and Rooks counties; Smith County in northwest Kansas had ended their term. Hale also informed the NCED Board that owners “have to pay the taxes and then the owner gets a rebate.” However, Hale pointed out that the Neighborhood Revitalization Act is retroactive; residents can start the application process and once it is approved by all the taxing districts, it would go into effect.

Hale presented his concerns to the NCED Board about implementing the Neighborhood Revitalization Act, which included who would administer the program, would additional software be needed, would there need to be extra staffing for the Appraiser's and County Clerk's office, would this cause an elimination of property coming off the tax rolls, and would this be an incentive to build. Also during the meeting, Hale posed the question of equity, "because each city can have their own program, would there be equity across the County?" Hale also asked "what is the Board trying to attain and what is the goal?" Hale suggested that the NCED Board needed to obtain more information before they proceeded. Kaufman (1959: 14) emphasized that "the ends of the community development program are entirely oriented toward improving and increasing identification with the locality." Therefore, in order to improve the locality found within Norton County, John Miller, Norton County Commissioner and NCED Board member responded by saying "utilize the plan as it is, we can't continue to not do anything. This is a step to say we are trying to do something. Hopefully, we will still be one of those counties in northwest Kansas that is successful."

Norton County Treasurer Cindy Linner raised various concerns about the process. Linner wanted to know what to do about residents utilizing the Neighborhood Revitalization Act who were delinquent in their taxes. Linner also needed to clarify the application process, "if the applications are in the NCED and County office, how would the City Clerks know?" Linner asked questions about the software that would need further research, "can those included and those excluded from the program be determined?" Miller asked when the software should be purchased, and Norton County Clerk Robert Wyatt replied "do it now, we need training on the software, and so we will have the software when we get the applications." Questions were posed about how Norton County residents would be educated on the Neighborhood Revitalization Act. NCED Director Becker Stiles informed those attending the meeting that she would make the information available in the NCED office and include it with other incentive information.

After the June 12, 2007 NCED Board meeting, Becker Stiles (2008c: 15) met with the Norton County Commissioners, County Appraiser, County Clerk, and County Treasurer to form a working group to "craft a Neighborhood Revitalization Plan that would best fit Norton County." A presentation of the decisions by the working group was held during the September, October, and November 2007 NCED Board meetings, and was documented in the minutes (James, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). The working group recommended that the Neighborhood

Revitalization Plan be authorized for five years to begin with and then if it worked well, additional time could be added, up to thirteen years maximum time. The residential abatement was capped at \$50,000 and the commercial abatement was capped at \$250,000. The general feeling was that the Kansas Board of Tax Appeals (BOTA) provisions could be utilized as incentives for any project above \$250,000. It was also recorded that costs to implement the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan included \$1000 for legal notice fees, \$5000 for software, \$900 for training, and \$2800 for maintenance.

“Economic development is not something that happens as an isolated community activity but is part of the larger community, which is embedded in the community’s relationships and norms” (Flora et al., 1997: 636). A public hearing on the Neighborhood Revitalization Act was held on November 13, 2007, and the Norton County Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (NRP) Resolution 2008-05 was signed by the Norton County Commissioners. The NRP was made available to Norton County residents through the DiscoverNorton website. James (2007c) conveyed in the November 2007 NCED Board minutes that Becker Stiles completed the next step in the process by contacting all taxing districts, municipalities, fire, school, and cemetery districts in an effort to encourage them to forgo their portion of the tax that qualified in Norton County. By December of 2007, Becker Stiles had brochures ready for distribution to the taxing districts, and for later distribution to community members.

The first NRP joint taxing district meeting was held January 17, 2008. Subsequent public hearings were held for the twenty-eight Norton County taxing districts, which also included the taxing districts that were primarily located in Phillips and Decatur counties. Becker Stiles reported to the NCED Board that the public hearings, newspaper articles and brochures had been effective in promoting the NRP in Norton County; however, once the public hearings were concluded, she would market the program more thoroughly. Jacobs (1961) warned that “whenever the capital is lost, from whatever cause, the income from it disappears, never to return until and unless new capital is slowly chancily accumulated.” At the February 2008 NCED Board meeting, Becker Stiles pointed out that one application had already been received, which indicated that the NRP had the ability to accumulate capital resources for Norton County.

Tax statements containing 2,500 brochures were sent out from the appraiser's office in April 2008 to notify property owners of the opportunity afforded to them by the NRP. By the end of the June 2008, the taxing districts, which included the City of Norton, City of Lenora,

City of Clayton, USD #213 Lenora, Northwest Kansas Library System, Almaena Rural Fire, Solomon Valley Rural Fire, Gettis Cemetery, and Lenora Cemetery had approved the NRP and had submitted the necessary paperwork to the Norton County Clerk. USD #211 Norton also chose to approve the NRP. USD #211 Superintendent Greg Mann (2008) stated,

“the plan would have no impact on the district’s budget. What the district didn’t get in property taxes would be made up by state aid. After the first 10 years is up, if there has been a lot of building, the district’s state aid would go down. But, they would have more property taxes.”

Becker Stiles continued to promote the NRP over the next year, and publicized that the NRP was meant to stimulate economic growth in Norton County. Becker Stiles (2008k: 6) stated in the August 2008 NCED Director’s Report,

“We sent out letters to the realtors, bankers, and construction companies to be certain they were aware of the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. Verla has been following up with all the taxing districts to ensure that the paperwork has been submitted to the Norton County Clerk if the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan has been approved and encourage those who initially elected not to adopt the plan to reconsider. Our goal is to have all twenty-eight taxing entities adopt the plan.”

As well, details about the NRP were clarified, which included improvements had to increase the property’s appraised value by \$10,000, and those who qualified for the plan would still have to pay their property taxes, but would get a rebate on the new assessed taxes for the improvements that were made to their property. The rebates would be given over a ten-year period, with property owners receiving a rebate of 100% of the increased property taxes the first year, 90% the second year, and so on.

At the August 2009 NCED Board meeting, Becker Stiles reported that she had been continuing to discuss the NRP with the taxing districts which still had questions, as the Norton County Clerk asked that they have a solid answer from each taxing entity by September of 2009, so that the software could be set up correctly. Over the next several months, Becker Stiles continued to meet with the undecided taxing entities and had received answers from all but the Oronoque Cemetery District. Becker Stiles (2009k) noted in the October 2009 Director’s Report that the Oronoque Cemetery members were searching for a way to fund the maintenance of their

cemetery; therefore, she researched potential funding sources for cemeteries with Civil War veterans and put them in touch with the National Cemetery in Leavenworth.

Verla Grysch, NCED Administrative Assistant confirmed in an interview that Oronoque Cemetery was one of eleven taxing districts that chose not to approve the NRP, which also included Almena Township, Almena-Harrison Township, Norton Rural Fire District, Decatur Rural Fire District, Clayton Cemetery, Edmond Cemetery, Center Township, Highland Township, Solomon Township, and USD #294 Oberlin. However, Grysch commented that the taxing districts of the City of Almena, City of Edmond, USD #212 Northern Valley, USD #326 Logan, Logan Rural Fire, Almena Cemetery, and Norcatur Cemetery elected to adopt the NRP.

Table 6.3 Norton Revitalization Plan Applications-2008 to2011

Application Year	Downtown	Commercial	Residential	Total Applications
2008	0	1 – Addition 1 – Airport Hangar	4 – Garage Additions 3 – Pole Buildings 2 – Shop Additions 1 – Home Addition	12
2009	0	0	1 – Shop Addition 1 – Home Addition 1 – Home Remodel 2 – Applications Denied	5
2010	1 – Remodel	1 – Remodel 1 - New Building 1 – Application Denied	1 – Pole Building 1 – Home Addition	6
2011	0	1 – New Building	2 – Shop Additions 1 – Home Addition	4

Becker Stiles disclosed to the NCED Board that she had been working with the County Appraiser, County Treasurer, and County Clerk throughout November 2009 to address any revisions that were needed to make the NRP run smoothly before the first rebate year began. Becker Stiles had received comments about possible revisions that would make the NRP application process run more smoothly. Hale said in an interview, “just because you want to make improvements does not necessarily mean it will make a difference in the appraised value of your property.” Therefore, Becker Stiles (2009m: 6) stated in the December 2009 Director’s Report,

“We are changing the application process to direct those interested in the program to the County Appraiser’s office to streamline the process. Currently the program

directs applicants to the County Clerk or Norton City/County Economic Development office first and, if there is a question about meeting the qualifications, we direct them to the County Appraiser's office. This simplification will be a positive adjustment for the applicants.”

The NCED and Norton County Commissioners pursued the implementation of the Neighborhood Revitalization Act in order to stimulate the renovation of deteriorating structures or the building of new structures through tax rebates. It was intended that through the return of financial capital resources from the NRP, that downtown building owners would be motivated to reinvest these resources into the Downtown Development program, which would stimulate the growth of the community's capitals and would generate additional capital assets for Norton County's community development programs. Although only one NRP application has been approved to-date for a downtown building, it is hoped that other building owners will seek to renovate their downtown buildings with the assistance of the Norton Revitalization Plan. Bradshaw (1993) implied that local people need to set their priorities and take the lead in mobilizing outside resources. Without the motivation of local interests and the attention to set priorities, little would happen to resolve local problems, and as a result, development would be unlikely. Therefore, “development must be done with rather than to a community” (Bradshaw, 1993: 170).

Political Capital – Leadership Norton County

According to Rossi (1960: 394), the variations in power structures found among local communities is a “function of the kind of political life to be found therein.” Consequently, the community's political life can be regarded as occurring on two interrelated, but to a degree independent levels. One is the set of governmental institutions that operate within a sphere of authority, with officials and employees that have defined functions. As a result, much of the power exercised in a local community is focused on these political institutions, which become the ultimate locus of the decisions that bind the community. The other level consists of a body of citizens that have voting rights and are organized to some degree into political parties. Rossi (1960: 394) believed that phenomena appearing on each one of these levels “independently influence the forms taken by community power structures.”

Rossi (1960: 394) declared that the structural characteristics of the local government are of consequence to the community's political life, which includes the degree that the roles of officials are "professionalized." In some communities the qualifications for incumbents are not exacting and officials exercise their functions only on a part-time basis; therefore, extra-official considerations are more likely to be of importance in the decisions that are made in official roles. In other communities, officials are professionally trained full-time employees who maintain independence from their extra-official roles (Rossi, 1960). Most of Norton County's officials are considered to be professionalized; however, because there were only 5,671 people living in Norton County in 2010, the extra-official considerations that are related to each official's capital resources do factor into the decisions made by the officials who reside in Norton County's small rural communities.

The description of small rural community leadership of 1947 are still very pertinent in describing Norton County's officials and their leadership capacity. Mrs. Cole (1947: 186) stated, "the leader is a leader of the people in the community... he knows the problems of his community because he has the same problems... he is chosen, accepted, and retained through the years as a leader because he is one of the people, no better, no worse... people trust him and abide by his decisions...he has attained leadership because of his integrity."

Leaders must be credible with various groups, be able to make connections, and be able to broker relevant political and strategic relationships. Hartley et al. (2007) continue to say that the dimensions of political skill are interconnected and are being recognized as elements of effective management; consequently, strong political awareness skills can create distinct advantages in delivering both personal and organizational success. Unfortunately, there is little conceptual understanding of political skills, as there is often a tendency to narrowly view political skills as self-interest. For that reason, leaders need the ability to visualize and communicate the bigger picture; therefore, greater priority needs to be given to developing leaders with the capacity to manage the political dimension.

Educational and training courses that assist leaders in managing their political capital resources include leadership programs administered through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). While all universities engage in research and teaching, each of the nations more than 100 land-grant colleges and universities also support and extend their resources

through this third critical mission. Although the Extension Service was created in an effort to address rural agricultural issues through the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, the Extension Service now reaches out to address public needs, through non-formal, non-credit programs offered to an increasingly diverse constituency, by a county or regional Extension Service office in or near most of the nation's 3,143 rural, urban, or suburban counties. The Extension Service plays an important role in American life and provides services in six major areas: Family and Consumer Sciences, Natural Resources, Agriculture, 4-H Youth Development, Community and Economic Development, and Leadership Development (CSREES, 2010).

Leadership Norton County is a leadership development program, which is managed by Keith VanSlike, Twin Creeks Extension District Agent in Norton, and was designed to “seek out future leaders in Norton County and help prepare them for positions of public decision making” (Leadership Norton County, 2006: 2). In an interview, VanSlike stated,

“Leadership Norton County got started because Extension is responsible for Ag, Natural Resources, Family Consumer Science, 4H & Youth, Community Economic Development, and Leadership. Extension’s resource is educating people, taking the university to the people. So the question was what can we do to promote leadership. We had the idea that we need to encourage people to know what’s going on in the community, to let them know that they can step out and take part of something, to let them know you have the ability to get into something, that there’s different ways to be a leader.”

VanSlike continued to say that he met with John Leatherman Ph.D. from the KSU Department of Agriculture Economics and Steve Herrs, Executive Editor of *Rural Connection*, as well as Elaine Mann and Carolyn Applegate from the Norton Area Chamber of Commerce, in order to develop a network of leaders. In June 1998, the group met with representatives from Cheyenne County and Sherman County because they already had Leadership programs in place. VanSlike stated in an interview,

“They told us to put down a date and go with it, so we borrowed information and came up with topics. We sent letters to community leaders and bankers to help put the program together, and to encourage them to nominate an employee. If you invest in an employee, they gain maturity and understanding. We put together a

brochure and 1999-2000 was our first class. We decided to do the program every other year and use people as our resources.”

The purpose of Leadership Norton County (2006) is to establish a network of present and potential leaders, so that upcoming leaders are given the opportunity for growth and experience with the assistance and guidance of those who presently hold leadership positions. Leadership Norton County is committed to having a membership of diverse and dynamic leaders that represent a cross-section of the county, from ethnic and minority groups, government and community organizations, business, education, religion, and the arts. The Leadership Norton County advisory committee reviews the applications and selects up to ten participants who live in or adjacent to Norton County, and demonstrate the commitment and motivation to serve the Norton County area. The eight-month program is usually held once every two years, and is self-sustaining through tuition, scholarships, and corporate sponsorship. The actual cost per participant is approximately \$200; however, because of corporate sponsorship, each participant is only required to pay a \$25 tuition fee.

Leadership Norton County is one of the most valuable programs offered to Norton County residents, who are the body of citizens that Rossi (1960) contended comprises the other level in a community’s political life. Leadership Norton County helps to emphasize all of Norton County’s capital resources through the education of class members, and by refreshing the knowledge of class organizers on the political capital resources that are connected to leadership, and as well, are connected to the built, financial, social, human, cultural, and natural capital resources within Norton County. Leadership Norton County begins its program in August with a presentation on *True Colors*, which helps to build political capital by educating class members about the different styles of leadership, and provides them with information on which style of leadership is best for their personality type and is best for a particular leadership situation.

The “Government” class day held in September centers on the political capital that is located in Norton County. Information is obtained on the Kansas 17th Judicial District from the Chief Clerk and Chief Court Services Officer. The class members meet with the Norton County Commissioners, County Clerk, County Treasurer, County Appraiser, and Register of Deeds. The class members also learn about the City of Norton services from the Norton City Administrator, City Clerk, and City Treasurer. Tours are held at the City of Norton Water Plant and Electric

Plant, and at the Kansas Correctional Facility located east of Norton. To complement their growing leadership skills and political capital, the class members are also given a course on Parliamentary Procedure and *Robert's Rules of Order*.

October's class day on "Agriculture" provides the class members with first-hand knowledge on the merger of Norton County's political and natural capital. Informational tours center on the Norton Dam and Keith Sebelius Reservoir, which is located seven miles west of Norton. Located around the reservoir is Prairie Dog State Park, which occupies 1,150 acres of shoreline and provides natural capital recreational opportunities to local and regional residents. Lunch for the "Agriculture" class day is provided by Jim Rowh, who uses organically grown produce cultivated from his Pure Prairie Organic Farm, which is located near Clayton, to use in the lunches he serves at his Pure Prairie Natural Foods store that is located in downtown Norton. The "Agriculture" class day concludes with a close-up look at agricultural industrialization in practice with a tour of Husky Hogs, LLC, a closed confinement facility that ships 120,000 hogs world-wide per year, and features a combination of natural, political, financial, human, and built capital resources at work.

The "Education" class day held in November focuses on the interaction of political, human, social, cultural, financial, and built capital. The class members tour various educational institutions located in Norton County, which includes tours of the Head Start pre-school program, the USD #212 Northern Valley High School, the USD #211 Eisenhower Elementary School, Norton Junior High School, and Norton Community High School, the Colby Community College Outreach Nursing Program, the Northwest Kansas Library System, and the Kansas State Library Talking Book Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Various lectures provided during the "Education" class day enables class members to become aware of the capital resources that can be obtained through the *Parents as Teachers* program and the North Central Kansas Special Education Cooperative (NCKSEC) Interlocal #636 that serves exceptional students. In addition, the interaction between political, financial, and human capital is examined as the class members learn about financing, budgeting, personnel policies, and student achievement from the USD #211 and USD #212 Superintendents and School Board members.

The December class day focuses on "Rural Health" in Norton County. The "Rural Health" class day conveys how capitals are invested so that small rural communities can continue to be provided with vital health care, in spite of outside power structures that impact the

stability of these valuable resources. The class members tour and are provided with information on the multitude of services that are provided by the Norton County Hospital, Norton County Health Department, Norton County Emergency Medical Services, and High Plains Mental Health Services. The “Rural Health” class day also gives class members information on Hospice Services, and provides tours to Whispering Pines Assisted Living Center and the Andbe Home Long-term Care Facility, both of which care for the needs of the increasingly elder population. As well, services for community members who want to improve their health through exercise are found during the tour to Fit-To-Go. These tours show class members how all the capitals can be mobilized to produce services that provide for the varying health care needs of Norton County’s community members.

The “Economic Development” class day, which is held in January, focuses the capital resources that help to strengthen Norton County businesses. The class members assemble for a tour of various businesses, and also receive presentations on how the owners began their business, the capital resources they use to maintain and improve their business, and the means they use to reinvest their capital resources. The tour begins in the Industrial Park area east of Norton with New Age Industrial Corporation, which has world-wide contracts for its aluminum fabrications, and continues with Natoma Corporation, which specializes in precision parts for the aerospace and medical industries. The “Economic Development” class day completes its tour at Rural Telephone in Lenora. Nex-Tech, a subsidiary of Rural Telephone, offers long-distance, VoIP, internet, home security, and cable television services to Norton County’s community members. Concluding the Rural Telephone tour is a lecture on the “Building Blocks of a Leader” (Beckman, 2007), which focuses on how the information that is learned from Leadership Norton County can be used to determine what the contribution of each class member will be as a Norton County leader.

In February, the Leadership Norton County class members travel to Topeka for a three-day class. The purpose of the “Topeka Trip” is to give class members a first-hand experience of political capital at work in the Kansas State Legislature. Class members attend House and Senate sessions, and have the opportunity to speak with our Governor, State Representatives, and Senators. Class members are also able to tour the Judicial and Supreme Court Center, Department of Commerce, Department of Corrections, Department of Health and Environment, and Department of Wildlife and Parks, and visit with the Executive Director of the Leadership

Kansas program. For the final class held in March, class members and all class organizers are invited to meet together for “Graduation” ceremonies. A guest speaker reinforces the need to practice the new leadership skills that have been learned and emphasizes the need to reflect on the different ways in which they can choose to be leaders. Class members are presented with a diploma that acknowledges their accomplishment as a Leadership Norton County graduate, and are reminded that they will become the resources for the next Leadership Norton County (LNC) program.

Table 6.4 Leadership Norton County Graduates and Past or Current Leadership Positions

Leadership Norton County Class of 1999-2000		
Glenn Brands	Board Member Northern Valley USD #212	
Gail Brandyberry	Postmaster City of Norton	
Shad Chandler	Owner/President Almena State Bank	Board of Trustees Norton County Hospital
Dave DuBois	Superintendent Northern Valley USD #212	Superintendent Jennings USD #412
Lance Hedges	Kansas Wildlife & Parks	
Chris O’Hare	Ag Valley Employee	
Don Peterson	Owner Peterson’s FARM	
Trent Richmond	Owner/Manager Bridges Insurance Group, Inc	President of <i>The Rock</i> Youth Center
Keith VanSlike	Manager/Advisory Committee LNC	PRIDE Partner Award, Graduate Kansas Environmental Leadership Program
Jolene Weiser	Owner/Manager Security Abstract Company	First District Chair Kansas Land Title Association
Leadership Norton County Class of 2001-2002		
Dave Brandyberry	Board Member Norton County Fair	Project Leader 4H
David Davis	President Lions Club	Board Member Norton Area Chamber of Commerce
Ray Dreher	Probation Officer Adult/Youth Services	
Cally Engel	<i>True Colors</i> /"Graduation" Class Organizer LNC	
Cindy Linner	NW District Representative Kansas County Treasurers Association	Advisory Committee/"Topeka Trip" Class Organizer LNC
Niki Kinderknecht	Board Member Almena Community Chamber of Commerce	
Leadership Norton County Class of 2003-2004		
Don Kaus	Owner/Manager Don’s Floorcovering	Board Member Norton Area Chamber of Commerce
Coni Park	Administrator Andbe Home, Inc.	
Doug Ray	Vice President First Security Bank & Trust	Board Member Norton Area Chamber of Commerce
Bruce Reeves	Owner Countryside Sales & Service	
Scott Sproul	Executive Director NCED	Board Member Kansas Economic Development Alliance
Troy Thomson	Norton County Sheriff/Emergency Preparedness Director	"Government" Class Organizer LNC
Deena Wentz	Board Member Twin Creeks Extension District	Board Member NCED

Leadership Norton County Class of 2004-2005		
Deborah Anderson	Lenora City Council Member	
Karla Anderson	Owner/Manager Karla's Agency Insurance	
Tom Brannon	Supervisor Norton County Road & Bridge Department	
Lacy Frack	Manager Norton Housing Authority	
Toby Kuhn	Norton City Council Member Ward III	Manager Prairie Dog State Park, Graduate State Park Leadership School
Rob Lawson	Norton City Administrator	
Bill Lowry	Superintendent Northern Valley USD #212	
Karla Reed	Director Norton Area Chamber of Commerce	"Graduation" Class Organizer LNC
Sue Urban	Board Member Lions Club	"Economic Development" Class Organizer LNC
Kathy Zimmerman	"Rural Health" Class Organizer LNC	
Leadership Norton County Class of 2006-2007		
Laura Brooks	Reporter <i>The Norton Daily Telegram</i>	
Darla Ellis	Norton City Clerk	<i>True Colors</i> Class Organizer LNC
Donna Foley	Board Member NCED	Norton City Council Member Ward I
Mike Haresnape	Vice President First State Bank	Board Member Norton Area Chamber of Commerce
Kelly Hill	Board Member Norton Area Chamber of Commerce	
Marvin Matchett	Manager KQNK Radio Station	Board Member Eagles Aerie #3288
Janis Monier	Board Member Andbe Home, Inc.	Advisory Committee/"Rural Health" Class Organizer LNC
Kelli Perez	"Education" Class Organizer LNC	
Patty Rowh	Norton City Treasurer	<i>True Colors</i> Class Organizer LNC
Leadership Norton County Class of 2008-2009		
Diane Becker Stiles	Director NCED	Member Leadership Kansas 2010
Rhonda Browning	Dietary Manager Andbe Home, Inc.	
Maggie Foley	City of Norton Employee	
Brad Hopkins	General Manager of Husky Hogs	"Agriculture" Class Organizer LNC
Mark Keilig	Manager United Northwest Federal Credit Union	
Kristi Kelley	Owner Mystic Moonstone	
Nancy McGinnis	Administrator Andbe Home, Inc.	
Ruth Schillig	Director Norton County EMS	Program Leader 4H
Sandy Smith	Board Member Eagles Auxiliary #3288	"Government" Class Organizer LNC
Jeff Wolf	Norton City Code Inspector	"Government" Class Organizer LNC
Leadership Norton County Class of 2010-2011		
Teresa Clydesdale	Nex-Tech Employee	
Craig Eveleigh	Eveleigh's Norton Sports Center	President Norton Young Professionals
Verla Grysch	Administrative Assistant NCED	Board Member Norton Arts Council
Catrina Kunclers	Holly's Clubhouse Employee	
Julia Nelson	Nelson Valley Feeds	
Nicole Rhea	Nex-Tech Employee	
Missi Schoen	Partner Worden & Schoen Attorneys	Founding Member Norton Young Professionals
Justina Smith	Norton City Council Member Ward III	
Jeana Yost	Office Professional Twin Creeks Extension District	

Although Leadership Norton County was the only program that was analyzed in this paper for its influence on the power structures found in Norton County and for its contribution to the political capital resources that affect the Downtown Development program, there are many other leadership programs available to the residents of Norton County, which are available through outside resources and were attended by Norton County residents. Sharp et al. (2002) found that extra-local linkages are significant for acquiring knowledge, contacts, and other resources. These extra-local linkages were provided by outside agencies, such as wKREDA, the National Association of State Park Directors, FHSU, and KSU Research and Extension office.

Many wKREDA members have participated in and continue to manage local and regional programs that are designed to create a new generation of leaders, which help to ensure the long-term success of rural Kansas. Becker Stiles served wKREDA as a 2008 Board of Directors member - North Position, and on the 2010 Business Development and Government Affairs committees. Crucial to becoming an effective leader and manager of a State Park, Toby Kuhn, Manager of the Prairie Dog State Park in Norton County and Norton City Council member, completed the rigorous two-year State Park Leadership School in January of 2009. Kuhn was provided with instruction on community and governmental relations, resource management, conflict resolution, safety and risk management, budgeting, marketing, and stewardship (NASPD, 2011).

Norton County's political capital has also been influenced through the Kansas Women's Leadership Conference (KWLC), which is a state-wide initiative developed by FHSU. The 2011 KWLC included breakout sessions on servant leadership, leadership in the workplace, trends in technology and social media, effective supervision, and public speaking, which provided Janis Monier of Norton with greater knowledge and insight concerning women's role in political leadership. The KSU Research and Extension office provided extra-local linkages for Norton County's community members through its Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership (KARL) program. Bill Unterseher, Assistant General Manager of Husky Hogs, LLC in Alma, and member of the 2009-2011 class, was selected for the program based on leadership experience and dedication to a more positive future for Kansas agriculture and rural communities. Jack Lindquist (2008: 2), President of KARL, Inc. and Director of the KARL program stated, "it is a powerful dynamic when you bring positive minded, action oriented, servant leaders together and

watch them debate issues and create solutions for our rural communities and their supporting industries.”

Outside agencies have the capability to promote the mobilization of Norton County’s capital resources through extra-local linkages, which can lead to a change in the community’s power holders or that can change the ability of an individual or group to influence Norton County’s political capital. The leadership programs sponsored by these outside agencies, as well as the Leadership Norton County program, have contributed to the development of new leaders, the increase in proactivity, and the improvement of self-esteem in political matters. As well, these programs have prepared new leaders for community service and for service in civic capacities, and has supported class organizers in expanding their leadership skills and knowledge of the resources available to Norton County.

VanSkiike (2008: 5) commented that “our rural areas are facing many challenges – population decline, tax base erosion, school financing issues, and medical care funding – among others. Leadership Norton County can play a vital role in identifying, training and motivating potential community leaders from throughout Norton County.” Leadership Norton County has positively influenced the distribution of capital resources that affect the Downtown Development program by making class members aware of the capital resources that are found in Norton County, by teaching them about the interaction between political capital and all other capital resources in Norton County, and by educating them that these capital resources must be invested in order to create new capital resources, such as those that are needed for the Downtown Development program.

Social Capital – Entrepreneurship Program

Many researchers measure social capital based on the resources held by individuals; however, Putnam (1993) believed that social capital, which tends to be self-reinforcing and cumulative, is a public good that is found in the collective norms of reciprocity, which builds trust, shapes the connections found in the networks of civic engagement, and is a resource that is positively associated with community development activities. Robison and Flora (2003: 1189) also claim that social capital exists in the networks that “can be used to describe the patterns of relationships or where one’s social capital resides.” Coleman (1988: S98) agreed that social capital is best seen in the recurrent patterns found in social networks, and also stated that it is a

productive resource, which makes “possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible.” Therefore, social capital is the resource that not only maximizes individual and community benefits, Flora et al. (1997) affirmed that it also allows purposive individuals to construct social organizations, such as the NCED Entrepreneurship program, because it explicitly utilized social capital resources for the benefit of Norton County’s community members.

Entrepreneurship in the rural community was described by Wortman (1996: 48) as “the creation of a new organization that introduces a new product, serves or creates a new market, or utilizes a new technology in a rural environment.” Although entrepreneurship was essentially ignored in classical economic theory, various authors (Schumpeter, 1934; Sweezy, 1943; Cole, 1959; and Penrose, 1959) of the early 20th Century recognized the role of entrepreneurs in building organizations, managing growth, constructing strategic interests, and developing activities that led to innovation. Innovation is defined as “doing things differently in the realm of economic life” (Schumpeter, 1934: 84); therefore, the innovator is the tool of the social relations in which he is enmeshed (Sweezy, 1943). Hoy (1996) also conveyed that research has found that public policy, which fosters entrepreneurship, is most effective when these efforts are matched with the needs of the local environment.

Entrepreneurs that receive local community support by means of networking opportunities, fiscal policies, political leadership, infrastructure, and a community attitude conducive to business activity facilitate entrepreneurship. However, Fedderke, de Kadt, and Luiz (1999) warned that the scope for innovative and entrepreneurial activity can become constrained if social capital is allowed to become defined to the point of complete certainty. Furthermore, Svenden (2006: 56-57) advises that “counter-productive bonding social capital throws a spanner in the works, if not outweighed by a continuous revitalization - and reorganization- of existing stocks of productive bridging social capital.” In order to continually revitalize the Downtown Development program, the NCED monitored the progress and success of its entrepreneurs, and adjusted the mentoring component of its Entrepreneurship program so that the best use of its local and outside resources could be utilized to bridge social capital and cultivate rural entrepreneurship.

Waters et al. conducted one of the first studies that examined the role of formal mentoring on both business and interpersonal outcomes in new business start-ups. Waters et al.

(2002) suggest that the formalized nature of mentoring influences familiarity, closeness, and trust, which are preconditions of psychosocial support. As well, Krishna (2002) observes that there is a clear linkage between community development, economic growth, and levels of social capital. Social capital, in the form of trust and solidarity is a potential resource, but only if it is expressed through competent leaders who can bridge between local groups. Thus, while the frequency of contact between mentors and entrepreneurs did not significantly predict profit, several studies (Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988; and Waters et al., 2002) found that the frequency of contact made a significant contribution to the entrepreneur's perception of business success. Therefore, entrepreneurs benefit from the bridging that occurs through contact, which is facilitated through networking. Furthermore, networking provides access to two important resources that Herreros (2004) identifies as being information and reciprocally exchanged services.

One of Norton County's greatest resources is the variety and depth of services and expertise that exists within the county; therefore, the Entrepreneurship program focused on efforts to grow the local business economy and to foster entrepreneurial social capital. One way the Entrepreneurship program assisted new entrepreneurs was by providing them with entrepreneurship packets, which contained information specific to Norton County. Each packet contained a questionnaire, which was used to identify the entrepreneur's needs and determine the capital resources they had to invest into their venture. Also included in the packet was a guide for writing a business plan, local educational resources, an application for the NCED's business education scholarship, and information on local financing resources. These tools offered the entrepreneurs the ability to benefit from local social, human, and financial capitals. Becker Stiles (2008c) noted that the intention of the entrepreneurship packets was to augment the assistance offered by the NCED, whether the entrepreneur visited the NCED office for assistance or attended a business start-up information meeting.

Also as a part of the Entrepreneurship program, the NCED collaborated with the FHSU Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Hays Area Chamber of Commerce, who had partnered together to offer a business mentoring program for those who owned and operated businesses in Hays. The requirements for the Hays program necessitated that the mentor must have owned a business or have had significant management experience for a minimum of three years, must be willing to invest one to three hours of time each month in the program, and must

be able to help the next generation of protégés make decisions that are more effective. A protégé must own a business that is viable and is their primary career focus, be willing to invest one to three hours of time each month in the program, and be willing to grow their business and accept advice from successful business owners in the community (Hays Area Chamber Of Commerce, 2008).

Becker Stiles (2008c) commented that many entrepreneurs would greatly benefit from the mentorship of a person who has experience and expertise in owning a similar business in Norton County; therefore, while the mentoring component of the Entrepreneurship program was designed to be more informal than the Hays program, Norton's program would allow mentors to participate when the NCED received interest from an entrepreneur. The mentoring component of the Entrepreneurship program began in November 2007 with the NCED compiling a list of Norton County business owners that were considered to be good mentors for entrepreneurs. In order to cultivate outside resources, this information was also shared with the Director of the Kansas SBDC. The mentors would allow the NCED to put their name and experience on a confidential list, which would then be referred to when an entrepreneur was interested in the program and visited the NCED office. Becker Stiles (2007a) emphasized that the NCED office would follow up with the entrepreneur to gauge the benefit of the program. As well, this program would also be beneficial in identifying and measuring the available capital resources in Norton County.

By December 2007, three entrepreneurs were interested in the program; however, by the March 2008 meeting, Becker Stiles (2008f: 3) informed the NCED Board that “to better meet the needs of mentees, we are adjusting the program to allow mentors from Hays to be matched with mentees from Norton and vice versa.” Becker Stiles reported at the June 2008 NCED meeting that six entrepreneurs were receiving assistance with their business plans and financing process, one was ready to present their business plan for financing, and another was ready to purchase a downtown building. Becker Stiles (2008c: 6) revealed that the NCED “assisted 13 entrepreneurs in 2008 and five successfully opened new businesses.” Holly's Clubhouse opened at their new location, adding three new jobs, Destination Kitchen held their grand opening on October 1st, and the ribbon cutting for Sew Up A Storm was held on Saturday, October 18th (Becker Stiles, 2008m). In 2008, Becker Stiles “provided services to 40 existing businesses on 67 individual

projects. She also worked on 11 business expansion projects; four were successful. She assisted 13 entrepreneurs, resulting in five new businesses” (Bradley, 2009b: 5).

Blanchard and Matthews (2006) propose that communities with a rich entrepreneurial spirit that have numerous locally-owned small businesses are more economically sound than communities with a few large absentee-owned businesses. This appears to be a result of locally-owned small businesses being embedded in the locality; and therefore, are less likely to relocate or scale back in economic downturns. Although 2009 saw many business failures in the nation, in January alone, Becker Stiles assisted four existing businesses on projects, and helped one local business owner complete a business plan and apply for a loan through the Norton County Revolving Loan Fund. This project retained one job. Becker Stiles (2009b) also assisted one business owner in locating sources for used furnishings to enable the expansion of a retail business; this project helped to retain four jobs. In May 2009, Becker Stiles (2009g) mentored six individual entrepreneurs that planned to open a variety of businesses in Norton County, two were met with extensively so as to assist them in writing their business plans.

August 2009 was also a very busy month for investing in social capital and promoting entrepreneurship. Researchers (Coleman, 1990; Svendsen and Svendsen, 2003) who have studied the benefits of social capital have found that it not only enhances economic growth, but also reduces transaction costs; therefore, social capital should be valued as much as the more traditional built, economic, and human capitals. Becker Stiles (2009i: 4) stated in the August 2009 Director’s Report,

“This month I assisted ten businesses with various projects and three people with job search and resume writing. I provided more information on the ARC Loan program to three businesses, presented information on new workforce incentives to three qualifying businesses, assisted one business in a property search for an alternative location in Norton County, arranged a storage location for the restructuring of an existing business, and provided energy efficiency incentive information to a local business.”

Becker Stiles (2009l: 6) informed the NCED Board in November 2009 that “more than two months ago, I assisted an entrepreneur with a SBA and corresponding revolving loan application to purchase an existing Norton business. The financing was approved and the new

business owners have now taken over the business.” The owners of Murnahan Decorating Service also met with Becker Stiles and explored options for the ARC Loan program. Although Murnahan Decorating Service was unable to access the ARC loan funding because of restrictions associated with the program, other local financing options were successful. For sociologists concerned with social capital, Molm, Collett, and Schaefer (2007: 207) imply that the most important benefit of generalized exchange may be its presumed enhancement of solidarity, in which community members are “mutually, or reciprocally, dependent on one another for value outcomes.” Based on the value outcomes of this exchange, Becker Stiles (2009: 6) acknowledged that “this experience guided my recommendations to two other businesses” that had been interested in the ARC Loan program.

Mentoring, through the use of social capital to invest in all other capitals, continued to be a major part of Becker Stiles responsibilities during 2010. Becker Stiles worked with an entrepreneur that considered starting a service business in downtown Norton, contacted two potential entrepreneurs to consider starting a service business to fill gaps within Norton County, assisted an at-home business owner who moved into the community, discussed potential incentives with a new business owner rehabilitating a building, assisted with the planning and financing to successfully reopen a downtown business, assisted an existing business with their expansion plans, and developed strategies and brought in state resources that would help a struggling entrepreneur retain their business. Becker Stiles also worked with West Town Realty to find a use and tenant for their vacant building, which had previously housed the downtown Dollar General store.

The NCED began first discussing business incubators at the time that they were informed Dollar General planned to move from their downtown store to their new U.S. 36 Highway site. At the February 2007 NCED Board meeting, former Director Wade Carter (2007) proposed that the advantage of using the former Dollar General building as a business incubator would allow a small business to prepare for being out on their own. The Dollar General space was also large enough that the NCED and Chamber could each have an office in the building. Although business incubators have usually been located in university settings or in urban areas, more business incubators are now operating in rural communities. According to the National Business Incubation Association (NBIA), business incubators vary in the way they deliver their services, in their organizational structure, and in the types of businesses that they serve. However,

successful completion of a business incubator program increases the likelihood that start-up companies will have long-term business success; historically, 87% of incubator graduates stay in business (NBIA, 2007).

Although the NCED Board decided not to purchase the former Dollar General building, Becker Stiles began researching the feasibility of business incubators and resumed seeking property for a business incubator site in Norton County, once she became NCED Director in August 2007. Becker Stiles presented a proposal for the development of the Norton County Business Incubator Center to the NCED Board at the February 2008 meeting. According to Becker Stiles, the Wilcox Building, which was a building in downtown Norton that was for sale, could be developed into an entrepreneurial center that would allow for three businesses, and included plans in which the basement area could eventually be developed into a resource center with reading materials and computers. Becker Stiles (2008c: 6) contended that “business incubators are essential to fostering entrepreneurship in communities of all sizes. Incubators house start-up businesses and help them grow.”

The NCED Board was not able to purchase the Wilcox building; however, Becker Stiles began investigating the feasibility of utilizing the Moffet Station as a part of the Norton County Business Incubator Center. Becker Stiles (2008g: 3) also reported to the Chamber of Commerce during their March 2008 meeting that “economic development would be interested in using the existing Chamber of Commerce office as business incubator space.” The Chamber committee in charge of making recommendations to their Board wished to proceed with the project; however, there were a few concerns that would need to be addressed throughout the negotiation process. Molm, Collett, and Schaefer (2007) point out that risk-based or conflict processes are strongest when relationships are viewed as that of competitors in unequal-power relations. In need of further time to consider the risks and benefits, the Chamber of Commerce did not agree to sign a Good Faith Agreement to co-occupy the Moffet Station building and create a business incubator in the Chamber of Commerce building until February 2010.

Because it was decided that the Moffet Station could be renovated to house the NCED office, the Norton Area Chamber of Commerce office, and the Norton Travel & Tourism Board, the project was renamed the Norton County Business and Visitor Center. The building owned by the Norton Area Chamber of Commerce would then be used to house the Norton County Business Incubator Center. A community that is blessed with a substantial stock of social

capital, which according to Putnam (1993) facilitates action and cooperation for mutual benefit, works together more easily. By May 2008, a crew from Norton County Road and Bridge demolished the deteriorating café attached to the south side of the Moffet Station, and the Norton Downtown Restoration Committee helped to clean out the remaining building. The Lion's Club sandblasted and painted the outside of the Moffet Station, and by September 2008, a new roof had been installed.

So that renovations on the Moffet Station could be more easily completed, various sources of financial capital were sought from both local and outside sources. Becker Stiles used her capital resources to write grants and complete applications to secure funding from the Hansen Foundation, the Small Communities Improvement Program, and the Community Improvement Tax Credit Program. Although funding could not be secured through these outside agencies, Becker Stiles (2009b: 7) commented in the January 2009 Director's Report that the Norton County Community Foundation pledged \$25,000 to the Norton County Business and Visitor Center project as funding to match the \$25,000 JOBS grant, which was received from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka in June 2009. Resources acquired from an outside agency were complimented by resources obtained from a local agency, which together supplied the financial resources that were needed to invest in the this Downtown Development project.

By June 2009, the Moffet Station project had been news for two years and still had not been completed, and as well the building had been accidentally damaged. Given that downtown development was one of their goals, the NCED Board agreed to proceed with renovating the Moffet Station in spite of the delays. Becker Stiles (2010c; 2010e) reported to the NCED Board in the spring of 2010, that the Chamber agreement was nearly finalized; therefore, she had begun developing the structure of the business incubator that would be housed in the former Chamber of Commerce office. The SBDC and Norton Development Corporation expressed interest in assisting with the financial capital resources needed to complete the Norton County Business Incubator Center project. With renovations finally coming to a completion, it was planned that the Executive Directors and staff of the NCED and Chamber of Commerce/Travel and Tourism would move into the Norton County Business and Visitor Center in early summer of 2011.

The Entrepreneurship program has not only benefited Norton County's entrepreneurs by helping them to cultivate their social capital resources, but has also provided Norton with an investment in the capital resources that have promoted the Downtown Development program.

Svenden (2006) notes that in specific power contexts, social capital is unequally distributed among social groups, and as a result, the absence of physical meeting places that promote the exchange of social capital can lead to misunderstandings and isolate networks of newcomers versus locals. Therefore, according to Svenden (2006: 63), “you run the risk of missing a lot of expertise if you do not talk together.”

Although entrepreneurs are innovators who are recognized for their distinctive ideas and resolute determination, they often have problems initiating start-up businesses because of their lack of expertise and uncertainty on how to manage the various forms of social capital that exist. Therefore, the ordered system of the mentoring component of the Entrepreneurship program coupled with the supportive environment of the Norton County Business Incubator Center would foster the positive exchange of bridging social capital that Putnam (2000) related to intergroup trust and cooperation, and would assist new entrepreneurs in navigating through the power structure of the community, which Portes (1998) associated with enforceable trust and bounded solidarity.

Human Capital – Downtown Restoration Committee

Economic progress is often viewed as resulting from the investment in nonhuman capital; however, investment in human capital also contributes to economic growth. Therefore, the traditional concept of investment in only tangible forms of capital must give way to a broader concept that allows for investment in the quality of human capital (Weisbrod, 1962). The solution to the rural community’s problems must first be sought within the community and within the community’s resource capabilities. Therefore, the effort to resolve some of the community’s problems must involve the utilization of its human capital resources, which includes community participation. While not all of the community’s social, economic, or political problems can be resolved by the community’s own efforts, Littrell and Hobbs (1989) agreed that mobilizing broad community participation should be a goal of any community development effort.

Emery and Flora (2006) believe that dedication to long-term development of human capital increases participation in community groups. As participation in community groups increases, positive changes in social and cultural capital also increase regarding trust and community norms and values. As well, positive changes occur in political capital as community

members outside the traditional leadership group find a voice in community affairs. As participation increases within the community's leadership group, community members not only work to overcome historical conflicts, they also expand their ability to interact with local and state government agencies, which helps to develop the financial capital that is needed for built capital projects. Building on the assets that enhance human capital not only develops new knowledge and skills, it also strengthens the capacity of community members to feel that they belong to the community. Therefore, when used wisely, human capital resources support the community's vision of the future.

Participation by community members in their community's development programs not only strengthens the feelings of belonging, participation is also significant to accomplishing the vision of the community development process. Sullivan (2004) stresses that involvement in identifying community needs, articulating the goals to meet these needs, and contributing the knowledge and skills to accomplish these goals has long been asserted in the writings and research concerning participation in the community development process. As well, Robison and Flora (2003: 1190) imply that "human capital may provide power through one's superior skills or knowledge." One of the ways that community members have contributed their skills and knowledge to their rural community's development programs is through the creation of and participation in downtown organizations. The Downtown Idea Exchange (2008a) contends that downtown organizations have taken on bigger roles by actively developing initiatives that nurture progressive programs and projects, by participating in development projects with private and civic partners, and by working to attract business and entertainment to the downtown area.

The Kansas Downtown Development Association (KDDA) was one of the first organizations to discuss programs that would benefit Norton's goals of downtown restoration and development. Jean Warta, Assistant Coordinator of the Kansas Main Street Program, visited Norton in early 2006 and addressed the Chamber of Commerce about the KDDA. The KDDA (2006) was developed in 1981, as a private-sector non-profit advocate for Kansas' Downtowns. In addition to its advocacy role, the KDDA facilitates communication and networking opportunities among Kansas communities that are striving to improve their downtown districts. The KDDA works closely with Kansas Main Street, a Kansas Department of Commerce program that is affiliated with the National Main Street Center. Kansas Main Street provides technical and financial assistance to designated local Main Street programs, and together, the KDDA and

Kansas Main Street offer the opportunity for training on downtown revitalization issues to any Kansas community through a Partnership City membership.

Although Norton did not become a member of the KDDA, agencies that would provide the outside resources that could assist Norton County in their downtown development efforts continued to be explored. In April of 2007, Gloria Nelson and Elaine Johnson attended a Kansas Main Street meeting in Belleville with Wade Carter, a former NCED Director. Nelson stated “the meeting in Belleville really got us motivated” (LeRoux, 2008b: 1). By the summer of 2007, the Downtown Restoration Committee was formed when Nelson and Johnson met with a group of people interested in the restoration of downtown Norton. By using the community’s human capital resource capabilities to address the problems faced by Norton’s downtown area, the Downtown Restoration Committee sought a solution to the rural community’s problems by first working within the community.

Becker Stiles acknowledged in an interview that “rather than pursuing the Main Street Designation, the local representatives felt they could create a similar program through Economic Development.” Pateman (1970) indicated that full participation occurs when each member of an organization has equal power to determine the outcome of decisions. Although the Downtown Restoration Committee had been fluid since its inception, Becker Stiles revealed that people participated in this organization as they made the decision to become involved in the projects. There were no formal, regular meetings; however, Becker Stiles disclosed that when the committee met, she was a regular attendee, along with a core group of members. In addition to the core group, others were asked to volunteer as needed.

Styskal (1980) showed that studies on organizations have consistently found that there is a positive relationship between commitment and power, when it is measured as participation in decision-making. This finding is also evident in the Downtown Restoration Committee. In an interview, Becker Stiles stated,

“Anyone is welcome to give as much or as little time as they have available. There’s no official membership list and the level of activity of each of the members fluctuates with their interest and amount of time they have available. This structure has served the committee well.”

Becker Stiles continued the interview by pointing out that the Downtown Restoration Committee was the primary source for volunteer labor on downtown projects and had an interest in event

planning as the projects were completed. Its members assisted with the Washington Street Park, Dr. Lyon's House, the Moffet Station, the Heaton Building project, and with downtown street scenes and benches. Additionally, Becker Stiles said that "the committee also continues to research and plan for future projects."

One of the first projects that the Downtown Restoration Committee worked on was the Washington Street Park. The Downtown Restoration Committee was given the "go ahead" by the Norton City Council, during the July 26, 2007 meeting, "to turn the fire destroyed property downtown into a small park" (Monier, 2007b: 1). Nelson informed the City Council that their request was to make the empty space next to Pure Prairie Natural Foods into a low maintenance park. Thus, Nelson consulted with the holders of Norton's political capital, in order to be able to fully utilize their human capital resources of planting trees, adding benches, and possibly painting a mural on the park side of Pure Prairie. Although Nelson told the Norton City Council that the Downtown Restoration Committee would not need their financial help, she did ask for help in developing the idea and acknowledged that the committee would bring the finalized plans to the City Council before starting the project. Nelson also asked if they would be able to use inmates from the Norton Correctional Facility to help with labor (Monier, 2007b).

Tom Dreiling (2007: 4), Editor of *The Norton Telegram*, commented on the Downtown Restoration Committee's efforts to turn a vacant lot into park, and conveyed that "we are impressed with the Downtown Restoration Committee's concern for a site that could, if handled right, turn into a gathering place, a rallying point." To encourage community involvement, the Downtown Restoration Committee held a public meeting on October 8, 2007 to explain the new park project that was planned for the corner of Washington Street and State Street in downtown Norton. Members of the Downtown Restoration Committee presented plans for the Washington Street Park, which included an architectural rendition of the park area with lighted brick walkways, two pergolas, decorative fencing, and foliage hardy to endure Kansas climate changes. The Norton City Council showed its willingness to help with the project by having city crews complete the necessary dirt work. Construction on the park began in the spring of 2008, and a grand opening ceremony and park dedication was held September 23, 2008.

In addition to informing the public about progress on the Washington Street Park, the Downtown Restoration Committee inquired about interest in revitalizing downtown Norton, during the October 8, 2007 meeting. Strauss (1963) claimed that however it is defined,

participation is generally considered to be a way of reducing power differences, which therefore stresses equality. The main concerns expressed by the participants at the meeting were supporting local businesses and raising awareness of shopping locally. Becker Stiles (2008a: 2-3) stated,

“Economic Development has worked toward the goal of downtown development through events such as the Open Air Market and Buy Local Day. Additionally, Economic Development has supported the Norton Downtown Restoration Committee, which has been successful in planning a beautiful park in downtown Norton in the empty lot where a building burnt down. There has also been two public meetings held to announce the park plans and to discuss revitalizing downtown in general. The meetings were successful and many people are excited about the idea of improving downtown Norton and was a good way to identify the strengths of Norton’s downtown. In 2008, we must continue with the efforts in Norton, but also reach out to the other communities in the county.”

In consideration of the interest that was shown during the public meeting in revitalizing Norton’s downtown, Becker Stiles (2008h) reported that the Downtown Restoration Committee had developed a renovation plan based on the Kansas Main Street Four-point Approach, which provided focus for the group's efforts. The Kansas Main Street (2008) program promotes the idea that an attractive, prosperous downtown business district is a visible barometer for the well-being of the entire community. The Kansas Main Street program offers a variety of services, such as consulting, design assistance, management training, business enhancement strategies, program evaluation, and provides incentive dollars to designated communities. All services are based on the National Main Street Center’s Four-point Approach Program of organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring.

The Kansas Main Street (2008) program uses a commonsense approach that capitalizes on the downtown's history and identifies community resources, which target the preservation and revitalization of historical downtown districts. A downtown that is healthy and invigorated provides the stability necessary for economic development, and preserves an important part of the community's and Kansas' heritage. Although the intentions of the NCED were to apply in 2009 to become a designated Main Street city, interest in Main Street designation faded. Mulder

(1971) asserted that the benefits in terms of individual self-realization or the contribution to the effectiveness of an organization will be limited, if procedures do not promote active participation. Verla Grysch, NCED Administrative Assistant disclosed in an interview that “there wasn’t the community or individual interest needed to run with the program. It started off good, but then became harder and harder to get business owners, etc., interested in going to the program meeting.”

Therefore, the NCED began exploring other ways to renovate downtown Norton. Becker Stiles (2008i: 5) noted in the June 2008 Director’s Report that “there is also an interest in whether Historical Tax Credits would be a viable option for our downtown buildings.” To further that goal, the Downtown Restoration Committee began working on acquiring a donated downtown building so that renovations could begin. The Downtown Restoration Committee invested their human capital resources in order to revitalize the downtown’s deteriorating built capital. In addition to the downtown building project, the Downtown Restoration Committee continued with its Washington Street Park project, and later used their human capital resources to enhance the natural capital resources surrounding the Historic Dr. Lyon’s House, by mowing the grass, removing the overgrowth, and working on the rock surrounding the trees that had been planted the previous summer.

As well as contributing their human capital resources on the downtown building project, the Washington Street Park, and the Dr. Lyon’s House, the Downtown Restoration Committee also helped to clean out the Moffet Station. Participation by other community organizations and supporters provided the needed human capital resources of strength and tenacity. Becker Stiles (2008g) remarked in the April 2008 Director’s Report that the Norton City crews removed trees and demolished the deteriorated south end of the building, while the Lions Club sandblasted and painted the outside of the north end of the building. A lunch fundraiser was held with the support of local stores, and at the fundraiser, community members were encouraged to share their memories of the building. The memories associated with the Moffet Station were collected, recorded, and bound in a memory book, which helped to demonstrate the importance of the building to the community and that also helped to preserve the cultural capital resources connected with downtown Norton.

The Downtown Restoration Committee continued its efforts to revitalize the downtown area when the Heaton Building was donated to the Norton County Community Foundation

(NCCF) in September 2008. The NCCF was established in 1994, with its Mission “dedicated to serving today, for tomorrow to make our community a better place in which to live” (NCCF, 2008). Blanchard and Matthews (2006: 2243) proclaim that “the power and influence of economic actors are not limited to the economic realm. These actors also participate in activities that contribute to the problem-solving capacity of communities.” The NCCF participated in the county’s problem-solving capacity by supporting Norton County’s local charitable activities through endowments. Funds are available for allowable projects and programs that promote the general welfare of Norton County’s residents, and which protect its rich heritage and provide incentive for its growth. Most importantly, “every dollar is used to benefit Norton County” (NCCF, 2008).

Becker Stiles (2008l: 3) stated in the September 2008 Director’s Report, “Currently, the Norton County Community Foundation owns two-thirds of the building and is still negotiating for the other third. The Downtown Committee and other community volunteers have begun cleaning out the upstairs of the Heaton Building. I am investigating the possibility of a Department of Commerce Small Communities Improvement Program grant to fund the structural improvements, including the roof, windows and brickwork.”

Becker Stiles (2008m) also arranged for an environmental review of the entire building, a requirement made by the NCCF in order to accept real estate. She reported to the NCED Board at the October 2008 meeting that after the review was completed and the building was insured, volunteers would resume cleaning the building and clearing out the upstairs and basement.

Becker Stiles (2008o: 4) informed the NCED Board at the December 2008 meeting that the Small Communities Improvement Program grant was not a match for the Heaton Building project; however, the environmental audit indicated there were no “recognized environmental conditions in relation to the property.” In January of 2009, Becker Stiles stressed to the NCED Board that in order to finance this large of a project, it was imperative that the Heaton Building either be listed on the National Historic Register alone or as part of a Historic District. The Downtown Restoration Committee needed financial capital resources in order to continue the investment of its human capital into the downtown’s built capital projects. The National Register of Historic Places process normally took two years; however, Becker Stiles had started

the process and expected that the NCED would be notified by March 2009 whether they had received the Heritage Preservation Grant to begin the Historic District Designation process.

The ultimate goal of the Heaton Building project was to renovate the ground level into viable business space and remodel the second floor into apartments. Because the Heaton Building is located in one of the main areas of downtown, this project was considered to be vital to the preservation of Norton's business history and to the redevelopment of downtown Norton. Littrell and Hobbs (1989: 55-56) claimed that "implicit is the notion that people are interested, motivated, and want to be involved if there are no structural impediments to their participation." Community members' sense of self-realization and feelings of well-being have been found to be related to participation and its consequences (Mulder, 1971). Therefore, when all community members are allowed to participate in the decisions that affect Norton County and the Downtown Development program, Mulder (1971) declared that not only will new structures for decision-making and communication develop, but the leadership functions of the more powerful will change.

Cultural Capital – Historic District Designation

As community members share a sense of place, they also share culture within the community. Klamer (2002: 467) considers that cultural capital is "the capacity to inspire and be inspired." Consequently, cultural capital is considered to be the personal history and experiences of individuals, which forms the lens through which their world is viewed. Cultural capital also figures into the conception of ownership, and when it goes beyond the legal sense of property, it serves the purpose of motivating the reevaluation of principles and reactivates the notion of a moral economy. Although it can be difficult to measure, it is important that RCDPs examine how the community invests its cultural capital into community development projects, as this provides an indication of the community's determination to preserve its heritage and share in its community's traditions (Klamer, 2002; Fey, Bregendahl, and Flora, 2006).

One significant community development project that focused on Norton's cultural capital was the listing of the Norton Downtown Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places. A historic district is a concentration of aesthetically or historically united buildings that are listed on the Register of Kansas Historic Places or National Register of Historic Places. A survey of the proposed district allows the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to evaluate

the eligibility of properties and determine appropriate district boundaries. The properties must be at least fifty years old, and their appearance must be similar to that of the time period in which they gained significance for their shared history. This includes the properties' physical integrity of location, design, and workmanship, which as well must be associated with persons, events, or distinctive characteristics of a historical period or method of construction. If the SHPO agrees on the eligibility of the properties, the nominations are forwarded to the National Park Service (NPS) for review and approval (KSHS, 2008a; Davis, 2009).

After the SHPO ensures that all of the proposed work has been completed and has met the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*, a Qualified Rehabilitation Completion Certification is issued and applicants may receive rehabilitation tax credits. State and federal rehabilitation tax credits are credits that are taken off income taxes that are owed to the state and federal government, which may be carried forward up to 10 years on state income tax returns and 20 years on federal income tax returns. State and federal rehabilitation tax credits provide the ability to save up to 45% for authorized rehabilitation expenses on qualified properties, and there is no limit on project expenses or the number of times that tax credits may be applied for. State and federal rehabilitation tax credits help to improve and maintain historic buildings and districts, assist in the use of historic preservation as an economic development and business development tool, and capitalize on history to enhance commerce and promote tourism (KSHS, 2008a).

In response to the various renovation projects that were being pursued in downtown Norton by the NCED and the Downtown Restoration Committee, building owners started expressing interest in renovating their downtown buildings. Although rural residents “remain in slowly disintegrating rural settings because of a preference for the freedoms that rural living provides,” Mayer (1993: 84) submitted that rural residents also understand the value of economic activity and recognize that the taxes it generates provides for the community. Kristin Johnson, a tax credit specialist from the Kansas Historical Society (KSHS), presented information at the NCED office in June 2008 on the funding opportunities that were available for the rehabilitation of historic buildings, which included tax credit programs, the Heritage Trust Fund, and the Historic Preservation Fund. Becker Stiles reported in *The Norton Telegram* that one of the primary advantages of the historic district program was that after renovation plans had been approved by the KSHS, building owners could choose to be a contributor and would then be

eligible to receive tax credits for complying with KSHS requirements. Although a non-contributor forfeited their eligibility for tax credits, they had the freedom to make whatever changes they would like to their building (LeRoux, 2009).

The Historic Preservation Fund grant written by Becker Stiles was approved in February 2009 by the KSHS. Becker Stiles (2009d) commented that the grant would help to fund a consultant that was needed to complete the historic resources survey on the buildings in downtown Norton, which was the first step in designating a historic district. While 60% of the costs for the historic resources survey were covered by the grant, the labor contributed by the NCED in gathering and inputting detailed information would meet the remaining 40% cost of the survey. The detailed information gathered on each building would then be used to determine the logical boundaries of the historic district, which was based on the year they were built, the building's architectural style and historical significance. "People hesitate to participate in what they do not understand" Friedrich, 1974[1950]: 1427. Another important outcome of the historic resources survey was to determine if community support existed for historic district designation, which was required in order to proceed with the process.

Becker Stiles completed the Request for Proposals (RFP), which was required by the KSHS in order to solicit proposals from consultants that were qualified to conduct a historic resources survey. The purpose of the historic resources survey was to aid the NCED in the identification, evaluation, documentation, and preservation of historic resources in downtown Norton. Becker Stiles (2009g) recorded in the June 2009 Director's Report that the NCED downtown committee had reviewed the proposals that were received in response to the RFP. Becker Stiles acknowledged in *The Norton Telegram* that Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc. was chosen as the consultant "because of their well-rounded expertise in both history and architecture. Other communities with similar projects highly recommended Sally Schwenk Associates for the quality of their work and their professionalism" (Bradley, 2009c: 5).

Becker Stiles submitted the necessary documentation to the KSHS to finalize Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc. as the consultant for the Historic Preservation Fund grant. The base map for the historic resources survey was forwarded to Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc. so that they could begin the historical research process and prepare for the first community visit, of which members of the NCED Board, building owners, business owners, and other interested community members were invited to attend. Kerry Davis of Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc.

conducted the first public meeting that was held in the NCED office in September 2009. Mulder (1971) admitted that participation is the most vital organizational problem of our time. Although only ten people attended the public meeting, Becker Stiles (2009k: 6) claimed in the October 2009 Director's Report that Davis "was well-received. I hope to have a larger turnout of building owners for the final meeting scheduled for January or February."

"Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc. finished the preliminary survey information" and Becker Stiles (2009m: 5) continued to state in the December 2009 NCED Director's Report,

"over the next two months, Verla will be uploading this data to the online Kansas Historic Resources Inventory as a match for the grant we received. The KSHS will review the information and Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc. will develop the final report during this time."

Davis traveled to Norton and discussed the completion of the survey at a public meeting held at the NCED office in March 2010. Davis informed community members that ninety-six buildings were surveyed and 46% of those buildings were considered to be eligible properties, most of which were located around the Norton County Courthouse. Davis revealed that the First Security Bank & Trust building located on the north side of the courthouse square remained the oldest building in Norton and dated back to the 1893 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, which was the oldest map to cover Norton (Bradley, 2010b).

Davis also affirmed that most of the buildings surrounding the courthouse square were considered to be eligible properties; however, initially all the buildings on the west side of State Street were considered to be ineligible (Bradley, 2010b). Davis gave examples of ineligible buildings and declared that even though the building that housed Dollar General was constructed in 1945, it was ineligible because of the exterior metal siding that was installed in the 1980s. As well, another downtown building was declared ineligible because the building owner had upgraded their door and added a new awning to the front of their building through the 2009 Storefront Renewal Project. Erickson (1996) pointed out that when planning and implementing community development, it must be remembered that power is maintained through discussions with community members. Although information flows from leaders to community members and back to leaders, decisions are usually based on the information that is available at the time the decision is made. While Davis stressed that decisions to make "alterations can be very

significant in the eyes of the national register,” she also implied that “there is negotiation to be had” (Bradley, 2010b: 5).

After receiving the final Norton Downtown Historic Survey report from Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc., Becker Stiles pursued a second Historic Preservation Fund grant that was used to offset the costs of hiring a consultant to complete the historic district designation process. Becker Stiles attended a grant orientation workshop in Topeka in March 2009, and filed the preliminary documents to accept the grant. In this application, at least 50% of the building owners in the proposed district had to sign a petition in support of the designation; signatures from thirty building owners who were in favor of the historic district designation were collected. Becker Stiles reported in *The Norton Telegram* that this grant was a 60/40 percent split of the actual cost; therefore, there was no opportunity to match the grant with labor, as was done the first grant. Also, since it was federal funding, it would need to go out to bid (Bradley, 2010c). Becker Stiles (2010g) affirmed in the July 2010 NCED Director’s Report that the RFP had been approved by the KSHS to hire a consultant to prepare the historic district designation nomination.

Kerry Davis, a historic preservation consultant and owner of Preservation Solutions, LLC, submitted the only bid to complete the historic district designation process. Davis had managed the Norton Historic District Survey while employed by Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc.; therefore, this enabled Davis to utilize existing research in the formation of the historic district designation nomination. Researchers (Emerson, 1972a, 1972b; Molm, Peterson, and Takahashi, 2001) have concluded that power, as determined by the exchange of benefits, motivates those to obtain more of the outcomes they value and that others control, while minimizing costs and losses. Davis conducted a meeting in August 2010 at the NCED office concerning the Norton Downtown Historic District nomination and discussed the value of being a designated historic district, and talked about how this project might benefit property owners and businesses. Davis expressed that the nomination process was scheduled for completion by November 2010, and if everything proceeded as planned, downtown Norton would be a designated historic district by 2011.

The application for the Norton Downtown Historic District nomination was approved on November 20, 2010 by the KSHS, “it is official at the state level” (James, 2010b: 1). Davis returned to Norton in December 2010 to discuss the Norton Downtown Historic District, which

comprised nineteen acres of civic, commercial, and industrial properties. The historic district lies in an area between two railroad alignments located on the north and south edges of downtown Norton, and is bounded by East Lincoln Street on the north, South Norton Avenue on the east, East Penn Street on the south, and South First Street on the west. Seventy percent of the structures contributed to the significance of the historic district, which included forty-three contributing buildings and one contributing structure of the brick-paved street network. The historic district included one non-contributing structure that was built between 1887 and 1985, and also included seventeen non-contributing properties that could become contributing if they were built within the historic period and were returned to their historic appearance.

On January 18, 2011 the Norton Downtown Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Property owners in the historic district received notification of the listing and were informed that contributing properties qualified for rehabilitation incentives, which included rehabilitation tax credit programs and the Heritage Trust Fund grant program (Chinn, 2011). Sproul (2011) commented in *The Norton Telegram* that along with the National Historic designation, the partnership of the Norton County Community Foundation, Downtown Restoration Committee, and Norton County Economic Development were working to provide resources to rehabilitate the area. “Many empty downtown Norton buildings will be renovated to offer space to rent in the downtown area,” which Sproul (2011: 1) proclaimed “will allow us to get startup businesses to locate in downtown Norton without renovation costs.” Sproul (2011: 1) also voiced the optimism that was shared by many others in the community, “we are excited about the future of historic downtown Norton.”

Natural Capital – Energy Efficiency Program

Investment in rural infrastructure not only benefits the rural community and its residents, it also facilitates the retention and expansion of existing businesses, and contributes to the development of new ones. However, while some rural communities focus on developing their infrastructure, other rural communities design strategies to offset a declining population by generating new employment and income opportunities through value-added agricultural commodities, or through the restructuring of their manufacturing industries. Nevertheless, while most rural communities need to encompass a variety of solutions and a broader array of strategies to enhance community and economic development, Whitener and Parker (2007) imply

that the building and expansion of infrastructure holds the most promise for the well-being of rural communities.

The USDA Rural Development agency administers and manages housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs. The Mission of the USDA Rural Development agency is to “improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America” (USDA, 2011). Since 2003, the USDA Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) has helped more than 6,000 rural small businesses and agricultural producers, which demonstrated a financial need, to receive assistance in conducting studies that determined the feasibility of renewable energy systems, in developing renewable energy systems, and in making energy efficiency improvements (USDA, 2011). REAP projects can include anything that produces energy through wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, or hydrogen-based sources (REAP, 2008).

REAP, which was authorized through the 2002 Farm Bill, was designed to increase business or farm productivity while reducing costs. REAP projects had to be located in rural areas and had to be technically feasible (REAP, 2008). The 2008 Farm Bill combined the 2002 Farm Bill’s Section 9005 program for energy audits and renewable energy development and the Section 9006 Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Program into a new Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Program, which became known as the 9007 program or the new Rural Energy for America Program. The bill also raised the amount of loan guarantee from 50% to 75% of total eligible project costs, and increased the maximum combined amount of grant and loan guarantee from 50% to 75 % of total eligible project costs. The 2008 Farm Bill also provided mandatory funding for REAP, and included authorization for an appropriation of an additional \$25 million for each fiscal year from FY2009-FY2012, should the Appropriations Committee determine additional funding was needed and was possible (NSAC, 2008).

Brandon Prough, USDA Rural Development Area Specialist from the Hays office, traveled to Norton in 2005 and 2007 at the request of the NCED Board, and made presentations on USDA’s grant and loan programs. However, it was not until February 2008 that Prough returned to Norton to present a workshop on the USDA 9006 program at the NCED office, as it was a requirement of the USDA “to provide adequate outreach about REAP at the state and local levels” (NSAC, 2008: 2). Becker Stiles (2008f: 2) claimed in the March 2008 Director’s Report

that “the attendance at the meeting was low, but others who could not make the meeting requested information afterward.” Prough again returned to Norton in March 2009 and presented information on the USDA 9007 Rural Energy for America Program. While strong ties form common goals, Robison and Flora (2003) profess that weak ties encourage community members to acquire information and resources from diverse sources outside the community. The seven people who attended the meeting learned about the REAP application process and were informed that it was best to simultaneously apply for the grant and loan resources.

The USDA (2008: 3) addresses “how do Applicants apply” for the USDA REAP grant and loan program by stating that the Borrower needs to “plan your project, consult experts, and start making decisions.” The USDA provides financial assistance for energy-efficient improvements; however, loans are made by commercial Lenders that are guaranteed by the USDA Rural Development agency (USDA, 2008). Therefore, securing a grant and loan for energy-efficient improvements depends on the rural Lenders preference to secure Guarantor status on a USDA loan or to locally lend the funds that are needed because “given the complexity of REAP grant and loan applications, you should contact your state’s USDA Rural Development Energy Coordinator before the formal USDA announcement of funding” (NSAC, 2008: 5). Therefore, it is imperative that local leadership understand and identify changes in state and federal programs that bring desirable results to their community, as “inconsistent programs at different levels of government serve no constructive purpose” (Castle, 1998: 22).

Although Prough and other USDA Rural Development Area Specialists were readily available to assist with the USDA REAP program, local rural Lenders often forego the stipulations required of the USDA and directly loan the funds for energy-efficient improvements, depending on the magnitude of the project and loan, and on the financial data that prudent Lenders consider before making a loan. In consideration of the complexities with the USDA grant and loan program, local Lenders acknowledge that there are often better options for making energy-efficient improvements to downtown buildings. One of these options includes energy-efficient improvements offered through Midwest Energy. Midwest Energy assists in the funding of energy-efficient upgrades such as HVAC systems, new windows, sealing, insulation, as well as other improvements offered through the How\$mart Lighting Program. Becker Stiles (2009b) noted in the January 2009 Director’s Report that energy efficiency projects required an energy audit, which also could be provided by Midwest Energy.

The How\$mart Program allows customers to make energy efficiency improvements with no upfront capital. The investment is paid back through a charge on the utility bill; however, the charge on the utility bill must be less than the estimated savings associated with the improvements. After completion of an energy audit, bids are requested from local contractors for the lighting upgrades recommended by the How\$mart Lighting Program. The building owner chooses the contractor to complete the work; however, the contractor must sign a Contractor Master Agreement from Midwest Energy before improvements can be completed. According to Unruh (2009), “when the work is complete, I will need copies of the invoices. We will then schedule a time for a post audit with Brian Dreiling and mail the final papers for signing. Payment up to the amount covered by How\$mart Lighting Program will then be issued to your contractor when the signed papers are received.” As well, once the requirements for the Midwest Energy How\$mart Lighting Program have been completed, the \$500 fee for the energy audit conducted by Midwest Energy would be refundable.

Various factors affect the accessibility and distribution of the community’s productive resources; therefore, when planning programs for community development, RCDPs must be aware of all capital resources available to the community, and as well must determine who holds the community’s capital and understand what impedes the distribution of the capital. A vital rural community has the capacity to use, sustain, and renew the resources that it needs to thrive over time; nevertheless, how the community uses its resources determines if it will succeed or fail in its community development efforts. However, in order to have successful community development programs, RCDPs must mobilize the community’s capitals prior to implementing these programs. A community that invests its resources not only creates capital, it also creates the ability to transform one type of capital into other types of capital, which in turn, provides access to additional capital resources that can be used to plan sustainable community development programs that protect and conserve the community’s natural capital assets.

CHAPTER 7 - Discussion and Conclusions

Tönnies (1905) implied that a community maintains itself as a living whole or unity, as a collective being that in essence remains the same, notwithstanding a shifting of inhabitants who dwell in a place that either increases or decreases its mass of inhabitants who have a connection with a piece of soil. Consequently, a community that perpetuates itself purposefully transmits its identity so that it is present in the minds of its members who feel or know that they belong to that community, and as well, stand to be recognized and acknowledged by others who may be only impartial spectators. Summers and Brown (1998) insisted that community identity persists as an element of personal identity. As rural communities continue to mediate between its community members and the larger society, ample evidence remains that “community and locality continue to matter as places to solve everyday problems” (Summers and Brown, 1998: 642).

It was the premise of this dissertation that all rural communities have great diversity, but no matter how small or how isolated they may be, each rural community has resources that can be invested to develop community capital resources. Each rural community has a distinctive life history and is a possession of the locality that is a comprehensive interactional structure, which community members participate in and identify with. Each community’s resources held by local community members vary from one community to the next and change over time. As well, each rural community is embedded in a larger social network that has the power to exchange resources for its own benefit. Therefore, it was also the assertion of this dissertation that the resources, which can be used to help its community members meet their daily needs, solve their problems, and improve their lives, are unique to that particular community.

It is also vital that RCDPs understand the intended effects of power on the distribution of resources in a rural community’s development efforts. According to Wrong (1979:2), power “is the capacity of some persons to produce intended and foreseen effects on others.” Therefore, without this knowledge, rural community efforts may not be successful. All rural communities have diverse resources; however, the holders of a rural community’s resources also have the power to influence the distribution of these resources. The objectives of this dissertation were researched to determine if the capital resources held by local community members and outside agencies, which were needed to successfully implement the NCED Downtown Development

program, were identified and utilized. As well, research was conducted to find if the holders of these capital resources also constituted the dynamic and interactive power structure that influenced the distribution of these resources.

While the goal of this dissertation was to analyze the outcome of the NCED Downtown Development program, the overall question became did development work and what was the evidence that development had worked. In order to answer this question, the case study method was used for the research conducted on the Downtown Development program because of its ability to aid in determining the success or failure of the development processes. A rich source of qualitative data was obtained from interviews with key informants and from participant observation of various meetings, which provided insight into the planning, implementation, and outcome of the Downtown Development program. Primary data from the NCED Director's Reports provided significant data on the resources that contributed to the expertise and funding that benefitted the Downtown Development program and assisted Norton County in building upon its capital resources. Valuable data was also acquired from archival materials, and from secondary sources of materials located in local newspapers and on internet postings, which updated community members on the progress of the community development programs that had been implemented in Norton County.

Since the NCED's first meeting in February 2005, it was determined that Norton County's focus for improvement should center on housing and labor, business retention and expansion, and the revitalization of Norton County's downtowns. With input from community members, the NCED Board and Directors implemented its Economic Development Strategic Plan and designed strategies to develop, implement, and evaluate programs that contributed to Norton County's downtown development. As a way to begin the community development process, Flora et al. (2006) encouraged RCDPs to perform an assessment of their community's capitals. RCDPs that use the Community Capitals as a framework for their rural community development programs are able to understand the interaction between their community capitals, establish how their community capitals build on each other, measure the change that results from the community's investment of their capitals, and recognize the impact that results from the investment of their community capitals.

After reviewing the findings, it appears that there were many capital resources that were utilized to implement Norton County's goal of community development, which as well included

the programs designed for Norton County's Downtown Development program. The outcomes of seven of these programs, which correspond to the Community Capitals Framework of built, financial, political, social, human, cultural, and natural capitals were analyzed in this dissertation to determine if Norton County's capital resources, which were held by local community members and outside agencies, were utilized in the implementation of the NCED's Downtown Development program. As well, the factors of community development, participation, solidarity, power, and resources were reviewed for their role in these Norton County rural community development programs. These programs include the Storefront Renewal Project, Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, Leadership Norton County, Entrepreneurship Program, Downtown Restoration Committee, Historic District Designation, and Energy Efficiency Program.

Storefront Renewal Project

The Storefront Renewal Project was a program that was designed by the NCED and was used to renovate the built capital resources of Norton County, which consisted of the buildings that were owned by local community members, and more specifically focused on the buildings that were located in Norton County's downtown areas. Norton County's building owners were able to participate in this program by matching their personal financial capital resources with the financial resources received from a grant that was provided through the NCED's Capital Outlay fund. As a result of the exchange of local political capital and the financial capital of the community, the NCED's Capital Outlay fund was financed by Norton County's sales tax revenues. The financial capital provided by the sales tax revenues, which was received primarily from Norton County's community members, was returned to Norton County through the renewal of its communities' downtown areas.

Through the exchange of capital resources, building owners were empowered to renovate their built capital assets, which also promoted the norms of reciprocity and trust that Putnam (1993) proclaimed is established through the sharing of a business's social capital. Norton County's small business owners that participated in the Storefront Renewal Project made improvements to their buildings that not only provided investments into their built and social capital, but that also renewed the cultural capital shared through a sense of place. This was evidenced by the building owners who declared their support for the Downtown Development Committee and for other downtown renovation programs, such as the Historic District

Designation. As well, participation in the 2009 Storefront Renewal project promoted solidarity, as evidenced by local building owners who applied for and participated in the 2010 Storefront Renewal project.

Through the use of local labor to complete the Storefront Renewal projects, human capital was also reinvested into Norton County. As well, several of the Storefront Renewal projects improved the energy efficiency of the buildings, which generated the conservation of Norton County's natural capital resources. This concurs with Ettlenger's (1994) argument that economic development activity is increasingly a local, bottom-up phenomenon. Heider (1958) remarked that power is the ability of a person to accomplish something, it is the ability of a person to alter their environment, whether it is human or nonhuman. The NCED mobilized capital resources held by local agencies, which were then linked with the capital resources held by local building owners so that they could renew their storefronts. The ability of building owners to utilize their capital resources to alter their nonhuman environments was an accomplishment that also made the Storefront Renewal project successful. Therefore, it was determined that the physical structures, which were a part of the Downtown Development program, were revitalized as a result of the Storefront Renewal Project.

Neighborhood Revitalization Plan

The Kansas Neighborhood Revitalization Act is a program that used political power at the federal level to provide financial capital resources through property tax rebates at the county level, with the intention to enhance a community's growth and development by encouraging property owners to improve their properties in blighted areas or in areas where there were architectural or historical significant buildings. Lake and Huckfeldt (1998) found that particular types of politically influential social capital are produced through networks of interaction among individuals. A network of interaction was created when the NCED, Norton County Commissioners, and the taxing entities of Norton County formed as a working group, and thus local social capital, which was needed to successfully research the details of the Neighborhood Revitalization Act, was influenced by local and outside political capital agencies.

As a result of the enactment of the Neighborhood Revitalization Act, resources were identified and mobilized to form the Norton County Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (NRP). Participation in this program helped to form bonds of community solidarity, which were

produced when community members revitalized or rehabilitated their property. Although the community member had to use their human capital resources of knowledge and interpersonal skills to participate in the NRP process, their human capital was also increased through the contribution they made to the community. Because an architectural and historical significant downtown building was revitalized through the use of NRP tax rebates, cultural capital was also increased. As well, this project helped to increase the building's energy efficiency; therefore, through development that promoted sustainability, the community's natural capital resources were reinvested back into Norton County and promoted interest in the Energy Efficiency Program.

Erickson (1996) implied that within certain groups, people have the power to make decisions for specific projects that generally have the community's best interest in mind. Based on the detailed information provided by the Neighborhood Revitalization Act, the working group built trust through their interactions and used their power to develop the NRP, a project that centered on the capital resources of Norton County. Although this decision was initially made to allow Norton County's financial capital, by the means of tax rebates, to be exchanged for the revitalization of a community member's built capital resources, further examination of this program revealed that by means of the NRP, numerous capital resources were exchanged that empowered a Norton County community member to revitalize their downtown building, which as a result, also created an investment into the Downtown Development program.

Leadership Norton County

Leadership Norton County was a program designed to develop well-informed and self-directed community members that would actively participate in the leadership roles of Norton County. Lake and Huckfeldt (1998) professed that as social capital, financial capital and human capital increase, political capital occurs more readily. Leadership Norton County not only helped to develop class members' political capital resources, but also their human capital resources that were obtained through the exchange of community knowledge, which was provided in an intensive seven-session program that focused on issues that were important to building community solidarity. As well, this knowledge helped to create additional social and cultural capital for the potential leaders, which was gained through experiences provided by

recognized experts, practitioners, teachers, and analysts who held positions of leadership in local government, agriculture, education, rural health, economic development, and state government.

Those who participated in the Leadership Norton County program exchanged ideas and engaged in actions that were designed to strengthen their leadership skills and contribute to making Norton County a place that was viewed as a productive asset. As well, participation in the Leadership Norton County program helped to build community capital resources through the education that was received on the built, financial, and natural resources distinctive to Norton County. Lindquist (2008: 2) asserted that “it is a powerful dynamic when you bring positive minded, action oriented, servant leaders together and watch them debate issues and create solutions for our rural communities and their supporting industries.” Leadership Norton County sought to produce a dynamic power structure in Norton County by preparing future leaders for positions of public decision-making that would help to create innovative solutions for rural development, and to give upcoming leaders an opportunity for growth of their political capital through the leadership experience.

Review of the Leadership Norton County program indicated that it has influenced the distribution and investment of capital resources found in Norton County, which has positively affected the NCED’s community development programs in general and more specifically, the awareness of and participation in the Downtown Development program. This is evidenced by class organizers continued determination in identifying the capital resources held by local and outside agencies, by utilizing this knowledge to educate class members on Norton County’s diverse resources and to make them aware of the importance of a healthy downtown, and by helping to empower class members so that they are able to take part in problem-solving roles and successfully step into positions of community leadership.

Entrepreneurship Program

Svenden (2006) indicated that in specific power contexts, social capital is unequally distributed among social groups; nevertheless, various types of social capital continue to exist. The Entrepreneurship Program was developed by Norton County’s RCDPs who realized that there was an unequal distribution of social capital found between new entrepreneurs and those that had well-established and inclusive internal and external networks of resources. Therefore, planning for the Norton County Business Incubator Center was based on the knowledge that

diverse resources existed that could be invested into helping new entrepreneurs develop successful interpersonal relationships. Although this program remains in the planning phase, the Norton County Business Incubator Center would help Norton County to invest in its social capital through networking and mentoring programs, financial capital through the use of local funding sources, human capital through increased business and technology skills, political capital through greater leadership abilities, cultural capital through a sense of place, as well as built and natural capital through the occupancy and sustainable management of a downtown building.

The mentoring component of the Entrepreneurship program was constructed by the NCED in order to provide Norton County with an orderly system of mentoring entrepreneurs. The Entrepreneurship Program promoted the investment of community capital resources, which were obtained through patterns of exchange with local community members and outside agencies that possessed a variety and depth of capital resources. Through these patterns of exchange, numerous Norton County entrepreneurs obtained assistance with writing business plans, developing expansion projects, conducting property searches, researching finance options and attaining funding, all which functioned to improve their business viability and build a foundation for community solidarity.

Fine and Harrington (2004) believed that participating in an ordered social system created a desire to continue and expand that participation elsewhere. By taking part in the mentoring program, Norton County's entrepreneurs were given assistance that encouraged their involvement in a network of shared interactions, helped them create access to additional resources, and provided them with the ability to generate new social capital. Hawley (1963: 422) proclaimed that "every social act is an exercise of power, every social relationship is a power equation, and every social group or system is an organization of power." Therefore, it was verified that the establishment of the mentoring component of the Entrepreneurship Program acted to create additional capital resources that not only empowered entrepreneurs, but that also contributed to the success of the Downtown Development program.

Downtown Restoration Committee

Hunter (1953: 250) observed that "the better organized groups do have some voice in community affairs. The second step is to organize other community interests so that they too can be involved." The Downtown Restoration Committee found their voice and rallied other

community members to invest their human capital resources into the creation of the Washington Street Park. The Washington Street Park was this group's first successful project, which contributed to Norton's natural capital resources through the beautification of an area that had once been burned buildings. The City of Norton approved the park's plans and contributed to its creation, thus the endeavor occurred through the exchange of local human and political capital resources.

The ability of the Downtown Restoration Committee to successfully use their skills and knowledge to complete the Washington Street Park empowered the committee to invest their capital resources into the Dr. Lyon's House project and the Moffet Station project. Participation in these projects not only empowered committee members, it also fostered community identification and cultivated a sense of place within other community members. This was evidenced by Norton County's desire to implement other Downtown Development programs, such as the Storefront Renewal project and Historical District Designation.

The renovation of the Heaton Building, a historic designated building, was the next project undertaken by the Downtown Restoration Committee. Activities that bring community members together, not only unifies them, but also promotes solidarity, and enhances community pride and attachment (Berkowitz, 1996). Community solidarity was enhanced through the partnership that was created as the Downtown Restoration Committee worked together with the NCED to acquire the financial and political resources that were needed to renovate the building's built capital assets. As well, a network of connections was built that reproduced Norton County's social capital resources and added to Norton County's cultural capital resources through the efforts that were invested into the renovation process.

"Gaining greater participation in community affairs has long been a major activity of community development specialists. Working to change the power structure so that other projects could be implemented has been a model for some" (Goudy, 1983: 48). The Downtown Restoration Committee facilitated the implementation of the Downtown Development program by utilizing their human capital resources and empowering local community members to invest their diverse range of capital resources in restoring areas of Norton, which had been devastated by fire or damaged through age. As well, the Downtown Development Committee was able to cultivate relationships with outside agencies that held the financial capital resources, which would be needed for the renovation of the Heaton Building and other downtown projects.

Evaluation of the Downtown Restoration Committee found that this organization positively supported the Downtown Development program and greatly contributed to the community.

Historic District Designation

In the search for financial capital resources that could be used for the renovation of the Heaton Building and other downtown projects, the NCED sought historic district designation of Norton's downtown area. The historic district designation was originally applied for in order to obtain financial capital from outside agencies. However, the most important reason for seeking the designation was to restore the built capital resources of downtown Norton, which would also greatly increase Norton's cultural capital resources that have been deemed crucial for the worth of the community. Cultural capital, which is acquired through preservation of the community and its traditions, can be appropriated through financial capital resources. As a result, state and federal rehabilitation tax credits, which can be accessed to preserve Norton's downtown buildings, have been made available through the listing of the Norton Downtown Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places.

The listing of the Norton Downtown Historic District was considered to be valuable for the benefits it would provide to Norton County; however, obtaining this designation required involvement of the downtown building owners and the substantial contribution of human capital resources from the historic district consultant, NCED Director and Administrative Assistant. Historic District Designation will aid downtown building owners to invest in their built capital resources through restoration of their buildings. Also as important, this listing will assist Norton County to invest in its political capital resources through its increased ability to engage in actions that contribute to community well-being and its natural capital resources through energy-efficient renovation projects. Local community members and outside agencies were instrumental in mobilizing and utilizing the capital resources that facilitated the implementation of the Historic District Designation, which will provide future benefits to the Downtown Development program.

Molm, Peterson, and Takahashi (2001: 164) assert that "exchange takes place only because actors value the benefits that others can provide." The bonds of solidarity have been enhanced as a result of the exchange of resources held by local community members and those of outside agencies in acquiring the Historic District Designation. "When someone is both high in

power and at the center of a network that produces great solidarity, power is transformed into legitimate power” (Kemper and Collins, 1990: 60). As these exchanges extend out into the community, community members will expand their social capital resources and gain a sense of empowerment from the renovation of their buildings located in downtown Norton. Assessment of the historic district designation shows that although this program has only been recently acquired and is limited to downtown building owners, the Norton Downtown Historic District designation has the potential to preserve, improve, and revitalize downtown Norton, which will generate new resources for the Downtown Development program.

Energy Efficiency Program

The NCED promoted the Energy Efficiency Program in response to the need for sustainable development of Norton County’s renewable and nonrenewable resources. Norton County had success in developing and implementing their recycling program, and in an effort to form a collaborative for wind energy development in northwest Kansas, the NCED began participating in the Northwest Kansas Renewable Energy Collaborative. USDA representatives were invited to Norton County so they could provide information on the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), which could assist Norton County business owners in purchasing energy efficiency improvements for their buildings. Mayer (1993) lamented that investment is anything but simple in rural areas. While the REAP program was investigated for its potential benefits to Norton County, it was not utilized by Norton County’s building owners because of the complexity of its program.

The NCED became aware of the Midwest Energy How\$mart program for energy efficiency improvements. Through the exchange of knowledge and information, building owners were able utilize their human and social capital resources and become empowered through their decision-making skills. Participation in this program required an energy audit so that the building owner could be made aware of the deficiencies in energy usage and could be informed about sustainable alternatives. Norton County’s building owners were be able to exchange financial capital resources, which were funded by the political capital resources of outside agencies, for the energy-efficient improvements that would help them to sustain Norton County’s natural capital resources. As well, the How\$mart program also increased the building

owner's built capital resources, and as well contributed to Norton County's cultural capital resources and deepened its sense of solidarity through the renewal of the downtown buildings.

According to Hunter (1953: 2), power consists of "seeing to it that things get done which have been deemed necessary to be done." Various energy efficiency programs that were provided by outside agencies were explored by the NCED; however, not all programs were a good match for Norton County's building owners. Therefore, the NCED explored the resources held by outside agencies and identified the program that would be the best fit for Norton County's downtown building owners and that could be successfully utilized in the implementation of the Downtown Development program. Therefore, after exploring the programs that were available to building owners, it was determined that the natural capital resources of downtown Norton could be enhanced through the Energy Efficiency program.

Ettlinger (1994) commented that the need for community and economic development research is critical at a local level. Because there is so much diversity among rural communities, it can be difficult to measure the resources that can contribute to community development. This study contributes to sociological knowledge because it looks at the ability of dynamic and interactive power structures to control capital resources in rural community development. As well, this study extends the literature on the importance of participation, solidarity, and the exchange of resources in rural community development, and adds to the research on the use of community capitals in identifying and utilizing capital resources in planning rural community development programs that are successful.

Research Objective 1: Identify the built, financial, political, social, human, cultural, and natural capital resources, which were held by local community members and outside agencies that could be mobilized to facilitate implementation of the Downtown Development program in the community of Norton, Kansas. As with many RCDPs who plan community development programs, the RCDPs who planned, implemented and evaluated Norton County's community development programs did not use the Community Capitals framework in their strategic planning process. However, they did assess that their constructed resources were deteriorating and their ecological capital resources needed to become more sustainable. Based on this assessment, Norton County's RCDPs implemented successful programs that capitalized on the locality's distinctive economic, governmental, societal, human, and local traditional resources.

Research Objective 2: Establish if the capital resources, which were identified as being able to facilitate the implementation of the Downtown Development program, were utilized in this community development program. Through the evaluation of the Downtown Development program in this study, it was determined that many of these programs that were planned and implemented by the NCED were successful, some programs were planned and not implemented, and other programs were discontinued based on the resources that were not available to successfully continue the planned programs. Therefore, the capital resources that were held by local community members and outside agencies, which were identified as being able to facilitate the implementation of the Downtown Development program, were utilized to its fullest in this community development program.

Research Objective 3: Determine if the local community members and outside agencies that hold the capital resources, which can be mobilized to facilitate the implementation of the Downtown Development program, also constitute the dynamic and interactive power structure within that system. Through their strategic planning process, the NCED was able to implement their rural community development programs based on the resources that were controlled by local and outside power structures. These resources were identified and mobilized by the NCED in the capacity that the exchange of resources between the power structures and Norton County's community members facilitated participation in the Downtown Development program and created a foundation of community solidarity.

Burton (2002: 1) felt that one reason to study rural communities was to gain new knowledge about how people lived and what their lives meant to them. In order to understand people in rural communities, local studies need to be conducted that look at "all their ambiguities and contradictions, all their negotiations across lines of race, class, gender, and power. We need to reveal the complexity of people without reducing them to simplicity." This dissertation is only a beginning analysis and is limited to Norton County, Kansas. Although the study has numerous limitations that are inevitable in any work on rural community development research, it is hoped that this research will be used in further studies of rural communities that are planning to implement community development programs based on the power to control investments in natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built capital resources. Kansas District 120 Representative Ward Cassidy (2011) emphasized that "if NW Kansas is going to continue to have services for our citizens, we are going to have to be proactive and start thinking outside the

box. We have to realize things are not going to be the way they use to be. Communities and counties should start working and meeting together now and work towards possible solutions.”

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