

Community Assistantship Program

Asset Survey for the Experiment in Rural Cooperation

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Asset Survey for the Experiment in Rural Cooperation

Prepared in partnership with the Experiment in Rural Cooperation

by
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January 2003

CAP Report 060

CURA RESOURCE COLLECTION

**Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
University of Minnesota
330 Humphrey Center**

ASSET SURVEY

EXPERIMENT IN RURAL COOPERATION

A UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP IN SOUTHEAST
MINNESOTA

Project Director

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Forward

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Although the asset survey was developed in close collaboration with the Experiment in Rural Cooperation's board of directors and other key stakeholders, the following narrative reflects the interpretations of the author, Lacey Hartman.

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SECTION ONE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Experiment in Rural Cooperation is a regional agricultural and natural resources sustainable development partnership funded by the Minnesota Legislature and administered by the University of Minnesota. Four similar partnerships exist elsewhere in Minnesota. The Experiment in Rural Cooperation is a citizen tool to broaden and deepen the land-grant mission of the University of Minnesota. The Experiment promotes University-based research, outreach and education in southeast Minnesota. The region includes the counties of Olmsted, Fillmore, Houston, Goodhue, Winona, and Wabasha and small portions of Mower and Dodge counties.

The Experiment in Rural Cooperation supports local projects and businesses in agriculture and natural resources, including farming, tourism and forestry. The goal is to foster a homegrown economy that will support self-reliant communities and a healthy natural environment in southeast Minnesota. Over the last four years, the Experiment has provided funding for a wide range of projects including a sustainable financing initiative to develop investment capital for local ventures; a locally owned and operated food limited liability corporation; and the development of wind energy resources in the region. A complete list of the Experiment's 43 projects follows this summary.

The Experiment's 18-member board of directors represents a broad cross-section of southeast Minnesota citizen leaders as well as five University of Minnesota representatives. The board believes that common-sense research and problem solving, using the vast array of resources available through the University of Minnesota, opens up possibilities for a strong and sustainable future in southeast Minnesota.

In March of 1999, the board of directors completed a region-wide asset survey. The information gained through this survey was essential to developing the Experiment's course of action over the next few years. As a result, hundreds of southeast Minnesota citizens and University of Minnesota students and faculty have participated in 43 projects.

The value of the 1999 survey to the Experiment was part of the inspiration for this second round of asset mapping. More important, however, was the sense among the board members that the challenges to sustainable approaches to enhancing regional vitality had become even more complex and difficult in the last few years. The goal of the 2002 asset survey was to identify what issues are key to a sustainable future for southeast Minnesota, and to reevaluate what role the Experiment can play in securing such a future.

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

The most common occupations or primary public roles among the respondents are local government (35.9%) and farming (22.5%).

The vast majority (76.3%) of the respondents have lived in southeast Minnesota for more than 20 years.

When asked to select among a list of issues those most important to the future of southeast Minnesota, there was most consensus around agriculture (79.8%), rural/small town life (70.7%), and economic development (61.6%).

37.8% of the respondents think that the quality of life in southeast Minnesota will stay about the same, 25.3% think it will deteriorate, and 23.2% think it will improve.

When asked to list the three most troubling issues facing the future of southeast Minnesota, the most frequently cited concerns were economic issues (50.4%); land use, growth, and planning (46.2%); agriculture (38.9%); and the environment and natural resources (35.4%).

When asked to list southeast Minnesota's three most important assets or strengths, 44.3% said that the people of southeast Minnesota are its most important asset. 41.6% cite the region's natural resources as important, and 41.7% mention that southeast Minnesota's natural beauty is an important strength.

40.3% of the respondents are most involved in an organization that is growing in vitality. 45.7% say that the organization in which they are most involved has remained about the same over the years; only 14.0% say that their organization is shrinking in vitality.

52.3% of the respondents think that the University of Minnesota can make a positive contribution to the future of southeast Minnesota through regional education programs. 24.8% cite the support of projects and small businesses as an important contribution, and 18.1% mention that the University of Minnesota could contribute to the future of southeast Minnesota through research.

45.1% of the respondents are very familiar with the concept of sustainable development. 43.4% are somewhat familiar with the term, and 11.5% are not at all familiar with sustainable development.

47.2% of the respondents think that sustainable development is a good concept. 22.3% think it is a good concept but clouded with negative overtones, 12.4% find it confusing, 7.7% support sustainable development but are uncomfortable with the term, 6.4% have no reaction to the term, and 1.7% reject the concept of sustainable development.

Demographics

The surveys were sent to a representative group of citizen leaders, elected officials, civic and community groups, agricultural and conservation organizations, governmental agencies, churches and others in southeast Minnesota. Of the 430 surveys that were mailed to eligible participants in mid-October, 242 were returned by December 11, 2002, yielding a response rate of 56%. Six additional surveys were returned after December 11, which brings the response rate up to 58%. This is a good response for a four-page, mail-in survey with several open ended questions. It is also important to note that the asset survey conducted in 1999 had a similarly high response rate of 59%. The respondents to the 2002 survey fall into a broad range of occupational categories, but are most commonly involved in local (primarily township) government (35.9%) and/or as farmers (22.5%). Other occupations include work in the non-profit sector, education, and the publications field. The vast majority (76.3%) of the respondents have lived in southeast Minnesota for more than 20 years. The organizations that the respondents are involved in work on a wide variety of issues, but the most commonly cited are those that also shape the Experiment's work: land use, agriculture, the environment, and public policy. The counties represented by those organizations are pretty evenly distributed across the region, with less representation from Mower and Dodge counties. The most important sources of information for the organizations represented in the survey are meetings (66.5%) and government agencies (63.3%). Generally, the organizations that respondents are involved in have sufficient information (84.3%) and are growing in or maintaining vitality (86.0%). However, scarce resources are a concern for about 48% of the organizations. Not surprisingly, when asked with which things organizations needed the most assistance, the most common response (60.8%) was funding.

Issues facing the future of southeast Minnesota

The respondents are generally optimistic about the future of southeast Minnesota, with 61% expecting that the quality of life will improve or stay about the same. Perhaps more importantly, when asked about the region's most important assets or strengths, the most common response was that the people of southeast Minnesota—and their work ethic and friendliness—are the region's most important strength. There is clearly consensus that the capacity to meet challenges thoughtfully and creatively exists within the region. However, there is also broad concern about how some key issues will impact the potential for a positive future in southeast Minnesota. The most commonly cited concerns include economic problems, changes in agriculture, issues surrounding land use and planning, and environmental deterioration.

50.4% of the respondents cite economic issues as one of the important problems facing the future of southeast Minnesota. The key concerns here are lack of livable wage jobs in the region and the loss of small town businesses. 41% of the respondents indicate that insufficient availability of investment capital is an issue of high importance.

Closely linked to concerns about the economic future of the region are concerns about agriculture. 38.9% of the respondents mention issues surrounding agriculture as key to the future of southeast Minnesota. Most of these comments center around concerns about the loss of small farms, the increasing influence of corporate agriculture in the region, and the combined effects of these changes on rural economic vitality. 69.5% of the respondents state that the weakening agricultural economy is an issue of high importance.

Issues surrounding land use, growth, and planning also figure prominently in the respondents' comments about key concerns for the future of southeast Minnesota. 46.2% of the respondents cite these issues as important to the future of southeast Minnesota. The overwhelming area of concern is that growth and development are occurring haphazardly and without a clear vision for the future. Many respondents specifically cite urban sprawl as a pressing problem. The comments indicate general frustration with the lack of systematic, community-wide discussions about the best path for growth in the region.

Protection of southeast Minnesota's diverse and beautiful environment is an important issue for many of the respondents. 42% state that the environment and natural resources are among the region's most important strengths. An equal number cite the area's natural beauty as a key asset. 35.4% of the respondents state that the deterioration of the environment is one of the three most troubling issues facing the future of southeast Minnesota. Specific areas of concern include water quality, soil erosion, and pollution.

Although not commonly stated, responses about community values and leadership in southeast Minnesota provide interesting insight into the potential to address important issues. 15.4% of the respondents mention tensions around the development of community as one of the most important problems facing the region's future. These comments are generally characterized by a concern that the people of southeast Minnesota are not communicating effectively about important issues, i.e. that there is lack of a "common vision". More specifically, respondents are concerned that tensions caused by changing population trends are blocking important conversations about the future of the region. These comments generally reflect a fear that differing perspectives among "old timers" in the region and newcomers distracts attention from issues that are important to all residents. This is perhaps connected to the broad concerns about unplanned growth and development.

The surveys also portray some consensus about what issues are not considered important to the future of southeast Minnesota. 52.6% of the respondents say that racial and ethnic tensions are of low or no importance. 49.8% indicate that housing for migrant workers is an issue of low or no importance. 42.2% of respondents state that limited access to healthcare is an issue of low or no importance.

Sustainable Development

The extent to which people understand the concept of sustainable development, and how they respond to the concept, are extremely important issues for the Experiment in Rural

Cooperation. The survey responses indicate that the majority of people have heard about sustainable development and that they support the concept, although some don't like the term. 45.1% of the respondents are very familiar with the term sustainable development. This is a change from the 1999 survey, when 34.2% of the respondents indicated that they were very familiar with the term. 43.4% are somewhat familiar with the term in 2002, which is very similar to the 41.7% in 1999. Only 11.1% are not at all familiar with the term in 2002, which is a substantial decrease from 24.1% in 1999. There is also broader support for the concept, with 47.2% citing it as a "good concept" in 2002 as compared to 39.9% in 1999. As was the case in 1999, less than 2% of the respondents to the 2002 survey reject the concept of sustainable development.

Recommendations for the Experiment in Rural Cooperation

Respondents were asked to select the two most important contributions that the Experiment in Rural Cooperation could make to shaping a positive future in southeast Minnesota. There is the most support for the Experiment to sponsor alternative projects in agriculture and natural resources (52.2%) and to support small businesses and food ventures (55.2%). These descriptions broadly characterize the work that the Experiment has been doing for the last few years, largely as a result of the support for such projects that was indicated by the 1999 asset survey. There is much less support for the Experiment to undertake large projects (15.1%) or to develop new projects or programs (10.8%). This breakdown of support for different types of work is quite similar to the results of the 1999 survey.

Recommendations for the University of Minnesota

When asked how the University of Minnesota can make a contribution to the future of southeast Minnesota, respondents indicate the broadest support (52.3%) for regional education programs. The University of Minnesota Extension Service, in particular, is cited as valuable to community education and development. Smaller numbers of respondents state that the University could contribute to the future of southeast Minnesota through project and small business support (24.8%), research (18.1%), and facilitation (16.1%). When asked about instances where the University of Minnesota has been of value, only 52.1% of the respondents answered the question. Again, regional education programs are the most commonly cited (51.6%). 34.1% of the respondents say that previous support of projects and small businesses had been valuable. 23.8% cite research as a valuable contribution. It is difficult to say what the low response rates for both of these questions (only 61.6% of the respondents answered the question about how the University of Minnesota can contribute to the future of the region) indicate about the perception of the University in southeast Minnesota. However, it is important to note that the questions about the University of Minnesota were open ended and near the end of the survey, which may have contributed to the low response rates.

Overall Comparison to 1999 results

The results of the 2002 survey as compared to the 1999 asset survey do not indicate any substantial shifts in opinion about the future of southeast Minnesota. The same issues that were cited as important to the region's future in 1999—the economy, agriculture, land use, and the environment—continue to be areas of concern in 2002. There seems to be greater consensus in 2002 that land use and the economy are among the most pressing concerns for the future of southeast Minnesota. As has already been noted, there are clearly more people familiar with the concept of sustainable development in 2002 than there were in 1999.

Conclusion

The 2002 asset survey responses indicate that the Experiment in Rural Cooperation's focus on agriculture, the environment, and land use resonate with what people perceive as the key issues facing the future of southeast Minnesota. There seems to be continued support for the kind of work that the Experiment has been doing to date. The respondents express heightened concern about the effects of unplanned growth and development. Implicit in these comments is a need for a more systematic and open approach to articulating a framework for future growth in southeast Minnesota.

Overall, it is difficult to characterize the manner in which the citizens of southeast Minnesota (as they are represented in this study) view the University of Minnesota. On the one hand, the survey responses indicate broad appreciation for the specific projects that organizations like the Experiment in Rural Cooperation and the University of Minnesota Extension Service bring to the region. However, there seems to be a disconnect between what citizens see as situations in which the University is doing important work, and the perception of the University of Minnesota as an institution actively engaged in improving the lives of citizens. Whether that disconnect is due to real or perceived shortcomings in the University's outreach and education efforts, and the extent to which such a disconnect really exists, cannot be clearly established from the results of this study. It does provide important context, though, for the discussion about how a more open and thoughtful conversation about growth and development in southeast Minnesota could be best facilitated.

**Experiment in Rural Cooperation
University of Minnesota Southeast Regional Partnership
Project Master List (January, 2003)**

(note: amount in parentheses represents Experiment in Rural Cooperation's actual financial support and does not include total project budget, nor in-kind contributions)

1. Agronomy Class Rural Experience – complete (2002): a dozen U. of M. agronomy students/faculty spending two days in southeast Minnesota with Experiment in Rural Cooperation board leaders and agricultural/natural resources project leaders.
2. Alternative Swine Production Roundtables – ongoing (2002-03, \$7,500): Area hog farms working together with University of Minnesota faculty on swine housing alternatives and practice improvements based on on-farm experience.
3. Animal Processing Study - complete (2000-01): Experiment in Rural Cooperation task force with U. of M. and community livestock agricultural interests to examine regional animal processing capacity to support area livestock farmers.
4. Apple Blossom Drive – complete (2000-02, \$9,500): U. of M. Center for Urban & Regional Affairs working with local government on development issues and options in scenic area within prime agricultural acreage in Winona County.
5. Apple Crisp Cooperative – ongoing (1999-03,\$10,000/\$23,000): Two-phase initiative to develop value-added apple products with support from U.'s Carlson School of Management and Department of Food, Science and Nutrition/COAFES.
6. Asset Issues Mapping II – ongoing (2002-03, \$12,500): Regional issues/assets mapping survey, undertaken by graduate student from the U.'s Humphrey Institute for Public Policy, as a way to focus priorities for the Experiment in Rural Cooperation's Board of Directors.
7. Badgersett Research Farm – ongoing (1999-2006, \$55,000/\$34,000): Two-phase initiative to commercialize hazel nut production as a sustainable woody agriculture crop alternative; support from U.'s College of Agricultural, Food & Environmental Sciences and CINRAM.
8. Birds and Grazing Practices - ongoing (2002-03, \$17,000/\$17,000): U. of M. graduate student working with 6 area farmers on grazing practices and their effect on wild bird populations in southeast Minnesota.
9. Building Local Tourism Marketing Capacity - ongoing (2002-2003, \$22,000): U. of M. Tourism Center all-day local tourism development seminar and consultation/support for 7 area tourism initiatives to build local capacity to undertake tourism marketing research.

10. Centro Campesino Migrant Housing – complete (2002, \$2,500): U. of M. Center for Urban and Regional Affairs with Community Assistantship Program student researching regional migrant housing needs.
11. Community Energy Self-Reliance - ongoing (1998-2004, \$15,000): Local community group working on municipal wind energy model, possibly using hydrogen fuel technology, with background support from the U. of M. Institute of Technology and others.
12. Country Heritage Adventures – complete (1998-2000, \$9,000): Group of agri-tourism interests working on marketing opportunities/strategies and supported by Carlson School of Management students.
13. Directory of Farms & Businesses – complete (2000, \$2,500): U. of M. Community Assistantship Program student initiative to compile listing of farms and business supporting southeast Minnesota's local economy.
14. Down Lighting – complete (1999-2002, \$12,500): Community-leader directed effort to encourage use of down lighting technology to conserve energy and protect the night time sky as a natural resource, and also providing consultation to U. of M. Facilities Services.
15. Education for Sustainable Communities – ongoing (2002-2003, \$20,000): Introducing sustainability-based curriculum materials into area junior high and high schools through efforts of U. of M. Extension Service, College of Education, and U. of M. CAP student.
16. Farm Story Project – ongoing (2002-2004, \$58,900/\$50,000/\$35,000): Experiment-funded initiative to tell the complete farm story in southeast Minnesota as a way to define future opportunities, including past/current contributions from U. of M. collaborations.
17. Farms to Schools Local Food Connections – ongoing (2001-2003, \$17,500): Local food initiative leaders developing new marketing opportunities for producers with schools and other institutional buyers, supported by U. of M. student and Department of Epidemiology.
18. Featherstone Fruits & Vegetables – complete (1999-2000, \$6,000): Design of inexpensive, portable grow-houses model to extend growing season and increase vegetable diversity options, with advice/support from U. of M. COAFES faculty.
19. Financing Sustainable Agriculture – ongoing (2002, \$2,500): Land Stewardship Project research study undertaken by U. of M. Community Assistantship Program student examining financial resources for sustainable farmers.

20. Finding Food in Farm Country – complete (1999-2000, \$10,000): U. of M. supported research assessing financial flow associated with food production and purchasing in Southeast Minnesota and its effect on the regional economy.
21. Food & Community in Southeast Minnesota – complete (2001, \$4,000): Overview paper to provide context for emerging local food network undertaken by holder of U.'s Endowed Chair for Agricultural Systems (College of Agricultural, Food & Environmental Sciences).
22. Food Business Development & Financing – complete (2001): Short term finance and business development training offered through Carlson School of Management adjunct faculty member.
23. Foods Working Group – complete (1999-2001, \$7,500): Twelve Experiment in Rural Cooperation food-related projects working in conjunction with a variety of U. of M. resources to foster development and launching of local food system.
24. Forest Landscape Management – ongoing (2001-2003, \$30,000): Region-wide forest landscape visioning project in cooperation with Minnesota Forest Resources Council, supported by U. of M. student, to be used to guide potential project funding.
25. Fresh Food Supply Chain Model – complete (2001, \$18,400): Hiawatha's Pantry/Full Circle Cooperative venture to mount a supply chain system model, supported through a variety of U. of M. resources.
26. Full Circle Cooperative Greenhouse – complete (1999-2001, \$10,200): Model development of energy efficient greenhouse to extend growing season for vegetable production, with consultation from U. Department of Horticultural Science.
27. Networking for the Future – complete (2001-2002, \$1,500): Community Assistantship Program student working with Blandin Foundation to assess communication technology options for inter-connecting rural communities.
28. Omega Cooperative Local Food Project – complete (1999-2001, \$12,200): Development of in-region producers cooperative as defined by consumer-based research to determine consumer-based marketing trends.
29. Paradise Prairie Products – ongoing (2000-2003, \$25,000): Development of a community-based food business with support of Carlson School of Management student and other U. of M. resources including 'By Design.'
30. Portfolio of Experiment in Rural Cooperation Initiatives – complete (2000, \$7,500): Publication and distribution of portfolio of Experiment-funded projects completed by Carlson School of Management student.

31. Renewing the Countryside – complete (2001, \$2,000): Financial and editorial assistance on publication of book featuring rural success stories, including several from southeast Minnesota, in support of U. of M. Northeast Regional Partnership.
32. Resources Asset Mapping Survey – complete (1999, \$10,000): Initial region-wide issues survey research to set agenda for Experiment in Rural Cooperation, undertaken by U. of M. Community Assistantship Program student in cooperation with Minnesota DNR.
33. Root River Cooperative Market – complete (1999-2001, \$7,000): Community-based local food system project to open new cooperative grocery store in Houston, MINNESOTA, a rural community that had lost all of its grocery stores owned by outside interests.
34. Selective Review of Documents – complete (1999, \$2,500): U. of M. student researcher review of pertinent documents and research reports containing information useful to the Experiment in Rural Cooperation's agenda.
35. Sirolli Project – complete (2001, \$5,700): Region-wide economic development training, working in cooperation with U. of M. Extension Service and the Initiative Fund of South Central and Southeast Minnesota.
36. Social Capital and Communication – complete (2000): Dutch researcher, in cooperation with U. of M. Department of Applied Economics, gathering information on communication issues associated local food system emerging activities in southeast Minnesota.
37. Southeast Minnesota Food Choices – complete (1999-2001, \$25,000): Land Stewardship Project initiative to design a major element of a local food system featuring sustainably-raised food products, supported by a variety of U. of M. resources.
38. Southeast Minnesota Food Network – ongoing (2000-2004, \$39,500/\$35,000/\$25,000): Start-up effort to launch – as the centerpiece of a local food system - a limited liability corporation comprised of area producers, supported by a variety of U. of M. resources.
39. Southeast Minnesota Sustainable Agriculture Consumer Survey - complete (2002, \$14,900): Extensive consumer research funded through the Experiment in Rural Cooperation's Southeast Minnesota Foods Working Group.
40. Sustainable Financing for Rural Minnesota – ongoing (1999- ?, \$62,700): Accessing new sources of capital equity and financing to support local enterprises, with support from Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs and Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture.

41. Value-added & Supply Chain Analysis– complete (2000-2001, \$9,500): Supply chain analysis conducted by Department of Applied Economics graduate student working with a select group of southeast Minnesota food producers.
42. Waste Wood Fuel – complete (1999-2001, \$24,150): Community-based Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and U. of M. College of Natural Resources research project focusing on recycling opportunities for region's waste wood supply.
43. Winona Farm Project – ongoing (2001-2003, \$10,000): On-farm model development of waste wood burner to cook recycled institutional food for animal feed, using a graduate student from U. of M. Institute of Technology to undertake preliminary feasibility research.

SECTION TWO
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Methodology

The Experiment in Rural Cooperation sent out surveys to a representative group of citizen leaders, elected officials, civic and community groups, agricultural and conservation organizations, governmental agencies, churches and others in southeast Minnesota. Many of the people that were sent the 2002 survey had responded to the 1999 asset survey. The Experiment's board of directors also added individuals and groups that had since been identified as having an active interest in agriculture, natural resources, and other issues important to the future of southeast Minnesota. An introductory letter, brochure, and project list were mailed on October 14, 2002. On October 18, 2002, a letter and the four-page survey were mailed. Subsequent mailings included the following: a reminder postcard sent on October 25, 2002, followed by a re-mailing of the survey on November 12, 2002. A final reminder postcard was sent on November 20, 2002. Copies of these materials can be found in Appendix F.

Of the 430 surveys that were mailed out to eligible respondents in mid-October, 242 were returned by December 11, 2002, yielding a response rate of 56%. Six additional surveys were returned after December 11, which brings the response rate up to 58%. This is a good response for a four-page, mail-in survey that included several open-ended questions. It is also important to note that the asset mapping survey conducted in 1999 resulted in a similarly high response rate of 59%.

Data Tables

Frequency refers to the number of individuals that responded in a particular category. Respondents did not always answer every question. The percentages are based on the total number of individuals that responded to each question, not the total number of returned surveys. This is referred to as a valid percent. Also, many of the questions allowed for multiple responses, so the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Question 1: Respondents' primary occupations, businesses, or public roles in southeast Minnesota, response rate 95% (231 out of 242)

Occupation, Business, or Public Role	Frequency	Percent
Local Government	83	35.9%
Farmer	52	22.5%
Business	38	16.5%
Education	29	12.6%
Environmental/land use non-profit or government organization	26	11.3%
Social/economic non-profit or government organization	12	5.2%
Legal	12	5.2%
Publications	10	4.3%
Elected Official	6	2.6%
Technology	1	-----

Tourism	1	-----
Arts	1	-----

Question 2: Length of time respondent has lived in southeast Minnesota, response rate greater than 99% (241 of 242)

Years	Frequency	Percent
More than 20	184	76.3%
11-20	22	9.1%
6-10	13	5.3%
Less than 5	17	7.1%
Do not live in southeast Minnesota	5	2.1%

Question 3: Issues most important to southeast Minnesota's future, average of 3.8 responses per survey, response rate 100% (242 of 242)

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Agriculture	193	79.8%
Rural/Small Town Life	171	70.7%
Economic Development	149	61.6%
Natural resources	133	55.0%
Tourism	103	42.6%
Forestry	65	26.9%
Wildlife	60	24.8%
Other*	37	6.5%

*included affordable housing, health care, "all of the above" (in reference to categories listed), infrastructure, education, community values, access to technology, maintaining diversity, and quality of life issues

Question 4: Assessment of future quality of life in southeast Minnesota, response rate 96% (233 of 242)

Quality of Life	Frequency	Percent
Quality of life will stay about the same	88	37.8%
Quality of life will deteriorate	59	25.3%
Quality of life will improve	54	23.2%
Unsure/don't know	32	13.7%

Question 5 (open ended): Three biggest problems facing southeast Minnesota's future, response rate 97% (234 of 242), see section 3 for a more detailed analysis of these responses

Problems	Frequency	Percent
Economic issues	118	50.4%
Land use, growth, and planning	108	46.2%
Agriculture	91	38.9%
Environment/Natural resources	83	35.4%
Population change	43	18.4%

Infrastructure	37	15.8%
Community values & leadership	36	15.4%
Education	31	13.2%
Other*	16	6.8%
Housing	14	6.0%
Government regulations	12	5.1%
Healthcare	9	3.8%
Loss of small town life	9	3.8%
Taxes	6	2.6%
Tourism	3	1.3%

*included crime, drugs, and diversity issues

Question 6 (open ended): Southeast Minnesota's three most important assets or strengths response rate 95% (230 of 242)

Assets or Strengths	Frequency	Percent
People	102	44.3%
Environment & natural resources	96	41.6%
Natural beauty	96	41.7%
Agriculture	52	22.6%
Community values	44	19.1%
Economic strengths	41	17.8%
Tourism	30	13.0%
Small town & rural life	27	11.7%
Quality of life	26	11.3%
Education	23	10.0%
Infrastructure	22	9.6%
Other*	16	7.0%
Healthcare	9	3.9%
Government Regulations & Leaders	5	2.6%

*included a variety of responses that did not fall into any category

Question 7: Two Contributions Experiment in Rural Cooperation can make to shaping a positive future for southeast Minnesota, response rate 96% (232 of 242)

Contributions by Experiment	Frequency	Percent
Supporting small businesses, food ventures, and other agriculture related initiatives	128	55.2%
Sponsoring alternative projects in agriculture, natural resources, forestry, tourism, etc.	121	52.2%
Supporting research on agriculture and natural resources issues	52	22.4%
Making existing support programs more accessible and integrated	51	22.0%
Undertaking a few really large projects (i.e. economic development strategies)	35	15.1%
Developing new projects or programs	25	10.8%
Other*	23	9.9%

*see Appendix A for a list of these comments

Question 8: Respondents rated the following list of issues on the basis of how important it was for the issue to be addressed in southeast Minnesota in the near future. Frequencies are noted below each valid percent.

	High Importance	Medium Importance	Low Importance	No Importance	Don't Know	Response Rate (of 242)
Weakening agricultural economy	69.5% 164	28.8% 68	0.8% 2	0.4% 1	0.4% 1	98% (236)
Environmental deterioration (water, soil, etc.)	65.6% 158	30.3% 73	4.1% 10	-----	-----	99% (241)
Loss of family farms	59.7% 142	32.8% 78	4.6% 11	2.1% 5	0.8% 2	98% (238)
Loss of main street businesses	57.2% 135	35.6% 84	5.1% 12	0.8% 2	1.3% 3	98% (236)
Land value pressures from outsider demand	45.7% 106	33.6% 78	16.4% 38	2.6% 6	1.7% 4	96% (232)
Departure of young adults from the region	45.1% 107	38.8% 92	12.2% 29	3.0% 7	0.8% 2	98% (237)
Deteriorating economic conditions	42.5% 99	39.1% 91	13.3% 31	3.0% 7	2.1% 5	96% (233)
Decreasing financial independence of farmers	42.2% 100	45.6% 108	7.6% 18	1.3% 3	3.4% 8	98% (237)
Insufficient availability of investment capital	41.0% 96	36.3% 85	16.7% 39	2.6% 6	3.4% 8	97% (234)
Deterioration of rural infrastructure (roads, sewers)	36.1% 86	40.8% 97	16.0% 38	3.4% 8	3.8% 9	98% (238)
Lack of good jobs in the region	34.5% 81	40.0% 94	21.7% 51	1.7% 4	2.1% 5	97% 235
Increasing and/or unfair taxes	32.3% 76	26.8% 63	28.1% 66	9.8% 23	3.0% 7	97% (235)
Loss of sense of community	31.9% 75	39.1% 92	23.4% 55	4.3% 10	1.3% 3	97% (235)
Increasing land use restrictions	31.1% 73	35.7% 84	25.1% 59	6.0% 14	2.1% 5	97% (235)
Needs of aging population going unmet	31.1% 74	42.4% 101	20.2% 48	2.9% 7	3.4% 8	98% (238)
Limited educational opportunities for children	26.2% 62	35.4% 84	28.7% 68	7.6% 18	2.1% 5	98% (237)
Lack of affordable housing	26.1% 62	41.6% 99	21.8% 52	7.1% 17	3.4% 8	98% (238)
Barriers to attracting new business	21.1% 49	40.5% 94	22.4% (52)	6.0% (14)	9.9% (23)	96% (232)
Limited access to health care services	21.1% 50	35.0% 83	32.9% 78	9.3% 22	1.7% 4	98% (237)
Lack of qualified workers	17.0% 40	40.0% 94	31.9% 75	5.5% 13	5.5% 13	97% (235)

Tourism problems/stress on resources	16.2% 38	37.4% 88	31.5% 74	7.7% 18	7.2% 17	97% (235)
Racial and/or ethnic tensions	11.0% 26	32.6% 77	37.3% 88	15.3% 36	3.8% 9	98% (236)
Migrant worker housing	8.5% 20	27.7% 65	36.6% 86	13.2% 31	14.0% 33	97% (235)

Question 9: Asked respondents to list the organizations, associations, government activities or special interest groups they participate in. See Appendix B for a list of these organizations.

Question 10: Asked respondents to indicate which of the organizations listed in question 9 they are most involved in currently.

Question 11: Issues of primary concern to the organization with which the respondent is most involved, average of 4.5 responses per survey, response rate 90% (219 of 242)

Issues	Frequency	Percent
Land use	113	51.6%
Agriculture	98	44.7%
Government	92	42.0%
Public policy	92	42.0%
Environment	89	40.6%
Education	80	36.5%
Community and family	74	33.8%
Natural resources	71	32.4%
Conservation	60	27.4%
Grants	51	23.3%
Information and referral	44	20.1%
Tourism	39	17.8%
Lobbying	34	15.5%
Research	25	11.4%
Religion	17	7.8%

Question 12: Counties in which the respondent's primary organization is active, average of 2.2 responses per survey, response rate 91% (220 of 242)

Counties	Frequency	Percent
Wabasha	76	34.5%
Winona	75	34.1%
Houston	61	27.7%
Fillmore	73	33.2%
Goodhue	63	28.6%
Olmsted	64	29.1%
Mower	32	14.5%
Dodge	33	15.0%

Question 13: Whether organization in which respondent is most involved has sufficient resources to accomplish its purposes, response rate 92% (223 of 242)

Sufficient Resources	Frequency	Percent
Yes	87	39.0%
No	107	48.0%
Unsure	29	13.0%

Question 14: Whether organization in which respondent is most involved has access to information necessary to carry out its purposes, response rate 92% (223 of 242)

Access to Information	Frequency	Percent
Yes	188	84.3%
No	14	6.3%
Unsure	21	9.4%

Question 15: Overall health of the organization in which respondent is most involved, response rate 91% (221 of 242)

Organization Health	Frequency	Percent
Growing vitality	89	40.3%
Shrinking vitality	31	14.0%
About the same over the years	101	45.7%

Question 16: Three most important sources providing information to organization in which the respondent is most involved, response rate 91% (221 of 242)

Information Sources	Frequency	Percent
Meetings	147	66.5%
Government agencies	140	63.3%
Elected officials	66	29.9%
Newspaper or magazines	63	28.5%
Internet or web	39	17.6%
Conferences	38	17.2%
Family, neighbors, friends	37	16.7%
University of Minnesota	34	15.4%
Other local organizations, churches, or civic groups	24	10.9%
Other higher education institutions	15	6.8%
Private companies	14	6.3%
Radio	3	1.4%
Libraries	2	0.9%
Television	1	0.4%

Question 17: Three most important areas with which the respondents' primary organization needs assistance, response rate 87.6% (212 of 242)

Assistance Needed	Frequency	Percent
Funding	130	61.3%
Planning	90	42.5%
Education	67	31.6%
Marketing	50	23.6%
Grant writing	47	22.2%
Resource integration	45	21.2%
Information gathering	42	19.8%
Research	40	18.9%
Advocacy	39	18.4%
Other*	12	6.1%

*See Appendix C for a list of these comments.

Question 18 (open ended): Ways in which the University of Minnesota can make a significant and practical contribution to shaping a positive future for southeast Minnesota, see Section 3 for a more detailed analysis of these responses, response rate 61.6% (149 of 242)

University Assistance	Frequency	Percent
Regional education programs	78	52.3%
Supporting projects and small businesses	37	24.8%
Research	27	18.1%
Facilitation	24	16.1%
Broader or different approach	21	14.1%
Promoting sustainability	13	8.7%
Supporting small farms and farmers	11	4.5%
Identifying issues and problems	11	7.4%
Job development	10	6.7%

Question 19 (open ended): Instances where the University of Minnesota has been of value, response rate 52.1% (126 of 242)

University Value	Frequency	Percent
Regional education programs	65	51.6%
Supporting projects and small businesses	43	34.1%
Research	30	23.8%
Facilitation	17	13.5%
Respondent's or family member's education	6	4.8%
Promoting sustainability	5	4.0%
Supporting small farms and farmers	4	3.2%
Identifying issues and problems	4	3.2%
Job development	2	1.6%

Question 20: Familiarity with the term sustainable development, response rate 97% (235 of 242)

Sustainable Development	Frequency	Percent
Very familiar	106	45.1%
Somewhat familiar	102	43.4%
Not familiar	27	11.1%

Question 21: Reaction to the term sustainable development, response rate 96% (233 of 242), average of 1 response per survey

Sustainable Development	Frequency	Percent
No reaction	15	6.4%
A good concept	110	47.2%
A good concept but clouded with negative overtones	52	22.3%
A confusing concept	29	12.4%
A concept I support though I am uncomfortable with the term	18	7.7%
A concept I reject	4	1.7%
Other*	9	3.9%

See Appendix D for a list of these responses.

Question 22: Asked respondents to list projects, businesses, individuals, groups, or programs that approach agriculture and natural resource practices creatively and have potential to contribute to a positive for southeast Minnesota. See Appendix E for this list.

Question 23: Whether respondents would be willing to attend a meeting to further discuss the issues raised in the survey, response rate 95% (231 of 242)

Options	Frequency	Percent
Yes	84	36.4%
No	56	24.2%
Maybe	91	39.4%

Experiment in Rural Cooperation's Board of Directors Comparison

The Experiment's board of directors decided that it would be interesting for the members to fill out the asset survey. Their responses are included in the overall data pool, but were also analyzed separately. Generally, the Experiment's board of directors did not answer the survey questions very differently from the rest of the respondents. However, there were a few questions for which this was not the case. Not surprisingly, the board of directors were much more familiar with the concept of sustainable development than were the respondents as a whole, with the vast majority (94%) of the board members describing themselves as "very familiar" with the term (versus 45.1% of the overall pool of respondents). The breakdown of responses to the term sustainable development among the board members was quite similar to that of the overall pool of respondents. A

larger portion of the board members (43% as compared to 25%) thought that the quality of life in southeast Minnesota will deteriorate. The board members did not differ significantly from the overall pool of respondents as far as identifying which issues are most important to the future of southeast Minnesota. There was, however, greater consensus among the board members that environmental deterioration and loss of family farms were issues of high importance. While these comparisons are interesting, it should be noted that it is difficult to compare such a small group of responses with the overall pool. Patterns that seem to emerge from the board responses may in part be due to the small number of board surveys.

SECTION THREE
ANALYSIS OF OPEN ENDED RESPONSES

Question 5

What are the three biggest problems facing southeast Minnesota's future?

The following provides more detailed analysis of the responses to the question about what problems are most important to the future of southeast Minnesota.

Economic Issues

50.4% of respondents cited economic issues as being of key importance to the future of southeast Minnesota. The most frequently cited concern was the lack of livable wage jobs in the region. The related issue of the loss of small town businesses was also an area of broad concern. Less frequently cited areas of concern included general statements about the need for economic diversity and stability, the need for development, and the lack of vitality of small towns and rural areas. A smaller number of respondents made the connection between economic difficulties and the fact that many people, especially the young, are leaving the region. The following list summarizes the survey responses about economic issues and indicates the number of times each issue was raised in response to the question about the biggest problems facing southeast Minnesota's future. They are listed in order of descending frequency. Illustrative quotes follow each category in italics.

Lack of livable wage jobs (22)

"Lack of good jobs in rural areas."

Loss of small town businesses (17)

"Loss of small town retail businesses."

Vitality of rural areas and small towns (10)

"Small communities struggling to survive."

"Economically viable rural communities."

Need for economic diversity and stability (9)

"Developing and maintaining a diverse economic base."

Lack of (resources for sufficient) economic development (9)

"Lack of economic development-can't compete with the metro area."

"Availability of capital investment for promising ventures."

Economic problems resulting in the loss of (young) people from the region (5)

"Loss of jobs/resources (young people) to urban areas."

The following quotes were difficult to classify, but provide important insights about perceptions of the economic problems in southeast Minnesota.

"Inflation and high cost of living."

"Lack of small city and local government funding."

"Lack of tax base to support services."

"Unquestioned belief in economies of scale."

"The gap between those who have and those who don't is larger with less of a middle strata."

Land Use, Growth and Planning

46.2% of the respondents cited issues surrounding land use, growth, and planning as being of key importance to the future of southeast Minnesota. The overwhelming area of concern was that growth and development are occurring haphazardly and without a clear vision for the future. Many respondents specifically referenced urban sprawl as a problematic issue. A similar number of respondents cited the impact that development has on farming as an issue of key importance. A somewhat smaller number of respondents discussed the challenge of balancing the need for development with preservation of the environment. The extent to which outside investment is raising land prices and limiting local access to land was also an issue of concern, though the least frequently cited. The following list summarizes the survey responses about land use, growth, and planning and indicates the number of times each issue was raised in response to the question about the biggest problems facing southeast Minnesota's future. They are listed in order of descending frequency. Illustrative quotes follow each category in italics.

Unplanned growth and development (in need of more careful management) (31)

"Lack of future vision and goals and planning."

"Continued rapid development...what form will it take?"

"Lack of awareness in decision-makers of unintended consequences of accelerated growth."

Urban sprawl (20)

"Educating the formally educated about land use, as they are the main culprits in urban sprawl."

Development impacts on farming (16)

"Loss of rural land to development"

"Land use plans that limit production agriculture"

Balancing the need for development with the need to preserve the environment (12)

"Maintaining a healthy natural environment while developing the region"

"Attracting new businesses without affecting the quality of life (pollution, etc)"

Increasing outside investment and its impact on land prices and local access to land (9)

"Land prices increasing out of the reach of beginning farmers—primarily due to outside investors coming in with big money."

The following quotes were difficult to classify, but provide important insights about perceptions of land use, growth, and planning in southeast Minnesota.

"Lack of coordination between county, township, and city land use planning and zoning, resulting in negative impact on water resources."

"People in cities and farms understanding the concept of sustainability."

Agriculture

38.9% of the respondents cited agriculture as an issue of key importance to the future of southeast Minnesota. The most commonly cited concern was the decreasing number of small and family owned farms. The closely related issue of corporate agriculture's increasing influence in the region was also a key concern. Respondents also expressed a great deal of concern about the broader impacts of a diminishing farm economy. Though they were cited much less frequently than the three previous issues, respondents also expressed concern about the environmental impacts of a changing agricultural base and the loss of diversified agriculture. The following list summarizes the survey responses about agriculture and indicates the number of times each issue was raised in response to the question about the biggest problems facing southeast Minnesota's future. They are listed in order of descending frequency. Illustrative quotes follow each category in italics.

Loss of small/family farms and farming as a way of life (38)

"Small farms are dying out"

Decreasing economic viability of farming and the broader economic impacts of this (28)

"(Loss of) economically sound agriculture that supports smaller towns."

Consolidation of farms, increasing influence of corporate agriculture (25)

"Industrial farms taking over with no connection or concern for the land and community"

Environmental impacts of a changing agriculture base (8)

"Rapid growth of surviving farms to factory farms which causes excess pollution"

Loss of diversified agriculture (7)

"Conversion of agriculture to larger and less complex operations"

Community, Leadership and Vision

15.4% of the respondents cited issues relating to community, leadership, and vision as being of key importance to the future of southeast Minnesota. These comments were generally characterized by a concern that the people of southeast Minnesota are not communicating effectively about important issues, and that leaders are not actively engaged in bringing this process to bear. More specifically, respondents expressed concern that tensions caused by changing population trends are blocking important conversations about the future of the region. Less frequently cited concerns included tensions between city and rural residents, loss of rural/small town life, and resistance to change. The following list summarizes the survey responses about community, leadership, and vision and indicates the number of times each issue was raised in response to the question about the biggest problems facing southeast Minnesota's future. They are listed in order of descending frequency. Illustrative quotes follow each category in italics.

Lack or loss of sense of community, common vision, and cooperation (12)

"Rural groups not cooperating to influence events."

"Lack of a common desired outcome for the area."

"Lack of vision for a sustainable future."

Inadequate leadership and representation (8)

"Lack of balanced leadership in local government."

"Sometimes I wonder if the state house realizes that the state exists below I-90. Judging from the credit we get for our accomplishments, you wouldn't think so."

Tensions between long-time residents and newcomers (7)

"New vs. old, locals vs. outsiders—which reduces benefits one could receive by an integration of this diversity—turn a handicap into a benefit."

Tensions between city and rural residents(4)

"Patronizing urban attitudes about rural and small town life."

Loss of rural/small town life(4)

"Loss of rural, the "golden egg"

Resistance to change (3)

"CAVE people, Citizens Against Virtually Everything"

Environmental Issues

35.4% of respondents cited environmental issues as being of key importance to the future of southeast Minnesota. Most of these comments were broadly stated, i.e. they simply noted preservation of the environment and natural resources as a key concern. Of those respondents that provided more specific definition of environmental problems in southeast Minnesota, water quality was by far the most frequently cited concern. Soil erosion was the second most common concern, followed closely by pollution from agriculture. Other, less frequently cited concerns, included pollution more generally, forest management and protection, increasing energy use, and loss of habitat/species. The following list summarizes the survey responses about environmental issues and indicates the number of times each issue was raised in response to the question about the biggest problems facing southeast Minnesota's future. They are listed in order of descending frequency.

Water quality (ground and surface)(22)

Soil erosion (10)

Pollution from agriculture (7)

Pollution generally and from industry (5)

Forest management/protection (3)

Increasing energy use (3)

Loss of habitat/species (2)

Question 18

How do you think that the University of Minnesota can make a significant and practical contribution to shaping a positive future for southeast Minnesota?

This question had a low response rate; only 61.6% of survey respondents answered this question. This was an open ended question placed at the end of the survey, which may be part of the reason for the low response rate. Despite the low response, the answers were extremely rich and varied. The complexity of the material gained from this question made it difficult to classify. The following attempts to summarize the information into categories. However, much of the material has been left in its original form, so as to not compromise the nuance of the responses.

Regional Education

The largest number of comments regarding the role that the University could or should play in shaping the future of southeast Minnesota (51.6%) centered around regional education. Many respondents cited Extension services as valuable to community development and education. A similar number encouraged the expansion or continuation of educational programs having to do with land use and the environment. A slightly smaller group of respondents expressed concern about cuts to Extension funding and that organization's ability to serve communities' educational needs. The following list summarizes the survey responses about the University's role in regional education and indicates the number of times each issue was raised. They are listed in order of descending frequency. Some respondents provided specific ideas for educational programs; these comments are at the end of this section.

Extension-continue good work (15)

"Continue outreach activities in greater Minnesota-Extension and related endeavors."

"Continue funding Minnesota Extension Service, a priceless resource for everyone."

Education programs related to land use and the environment (10)

"By educating people that land is something sacred, a gift to use, share and preserve for future generations."

"More involvement in environmental and natural resource education and a better outreach program related to these issues."

Extension-budget cuts, need for improvement (7)

"Extension in the past was essential, unfortunately it isn't the hub of information any longer."

"Through Extension, which they have cut the funding."

Seminars and education services generally (5)

"Provide resource people and programming to southeast Minnesota."

Education programs related to economic development (4)

"Contributing research and practical advice to alternative producers, and to businesses trying to better use local ag products."

Education opportunities/seminars should be held in enough places that they exist within reasonable driving distance of all residents (2)

The following comments had to do with the development of specific educational projects:

"General public has poor understanding of Minnesota government and its revenue gathering"

"Computer training to general public"

"Provide educational opportunities to retrain and reeducate workers via the Internet."

"Work with small rural schools to offer interactive classes through web and classrooms. Would like to see both day and evening classes offered."

Project Support

34.1% of the respondents cited the support of projects and small businesses as a key role for the University to play in shaping the future of southeast Minnesota. The more specific comments fell generally into two categories: support projects related to economic development and support projects that assist farmers, especially young farmers. The number of responses that fell into each category, along with illustrative quotes, are listed below.

Support projects that assist farmers, especially young farmers (6)

"Stabilize the family farm and make it affordable for youth to start operating."

"Help with farmland transition to the next generation."

Support projects related to economic development (5)

"Their ability to help research and lead projects for either economic growth within tourism or small business growth."

"By forming a regional/statewide taskforce that would assist in finding a solution to the loss of small business in rural communities or how to combat this issue."

The following suggestions did not fit neatly into either category:

"Purchase land for public use"

"Encourage investment in alternative energy"

Research

23.8% of the respondents cited research as an important way for the University to shape the future of southeast Minnesota. Many of these comments were quite general and expressed appreciation for past research and/or encouraged more of it for the future. The following comments make more specific recommendations or observations regarding the University's research work.

“Create a door to the University for multi-disciplinary research projects. A good example is the need to fully study groundwater pollution removal in ag settings.”

“Developing alternative fuel sources.”

University of Minnesota should take a different approach

14.1% of the comments fell into the general category of “the University needs to take a different approach.” The majority of these comments had to do with making University services more accessible and grassroots oriented. A slightly smaller number of the responses related specifically to broadening the University’s approach to agriculture to engage and support smaller, non-corporate farmers. The following list summarizes the survey responses about the University of Minnesota taking a different approach and indicates the number of times each issue was raised. They are listed in order of descending frequency. Illustrative quotes follow each category in italics.

Be more involved at local, grassroots level and be more accessible (9)

“Getting involved directly, getting out in the field, learning what’s going on and what’s needed”

“More accessible, local consultation and assistance”

Expand agricultural services to include smaller, non-corporate approaches. (5)

“Change in mindset from supporting large agribusiness to assisting sustainable farming and small, rural business”

“Quit trying to get every farmer to get bigger and make them land poor like out west. Learn ways to start out young farmers.”

The following quotes were difficult to classify, but provide valuable insights about what sorts of alternative approaches the University might take when working with communities.

“They need to think sustainability—long term not short term survival and immediate profit. They have to recognize the need for major policy changes. Too often U of M people seem to seek out a situation or producer who is successful by their definition and then try to duplicate this. They need to recognize the uniqueness of each individual and situation...”

“Be open minded, the U of M way is not the only way...”

“Shift again from self preservation (preserving positions) to genuinely serving again-growth occurs through service not manufactured need... Provide not only planning services but, as projects change over time, politicians change, new staff—be able to follow up over the long term to keep on track.”

University providing facilitation services, consensus building, and planning assistance

13.5% of the comments dealt with the potential for the University to expand its role in facilitating action and discussion around issues of common concern in southeast Minnesota. The majority of these comments dealt with broad notions of facilitation and cooperation among various groups. A smaller number of respondents recommended that the University continue or expand its technical role as a facilitator.

Work to coordinate organizations and people to act on common goals (13)

"By performing the role of synthesizer helping to coordinate activities of the public and private sector"

"Provide continuity, coordination between different levels of government."

"Everyone seems to be doing "own thing", working together as a team would be much more effective in achieving common goals."

Provide facilitation services (5)

Participate in planning and development discussions (3)

"Can the U of M think of a way to enhance the incorporation of local values and environmental concerns into the development process?...Choosing the character of growth, or rather, influencing it, means placing incentives and regulations quickly and developing a public sense of responsibility above current levels."

APPENDIX A

Question 7, responses listed as "other." *What do you think would be the most valuable contributions that an organization like the Experiment in Rural Cooperation could make to shaping a positive future for southeast Minnesota?*

- promoting cooperation along a number of fronts
- Facilitate collaboration, cooperation & understanding by and between cities, townships & counties relative to land use, zoning issues and a means of allowing growth in a fashion that makes sense relative to economics, water resources, & the natural environment
- actively support legislation which benefits rural/small business/ag interests (telecommunications, funded mandates, transportations, LGAs, etc.)
- share what has been learned so far-what's transferable to others?-I have heard nothing so far
- help engage expertise for communities/counties struggling with large decisions-i.e. Hwy 61, county & township zoning & planning, alternative development strategies need to be as "slick" as the developers
- lobby in legislature & Congress
- develop regions where public services could be provided from a regional source rather than each individual city/area provide them
- education on "real costs" of poorly planned development
- Development of a "big picture" vision of how to enhance the opportunities for ag, natural resources and businesses in ways that are mutually supportive, i.e. is not a zero sum game where one "industry" gains at expense of other
- an initiative to monitor profitability for farmers (all agriculture) in the new free trade multinational environment
- networking communities
- continuing to knock on doors of the university and introducing/matching resources to SE MN, raising the consciousness of SE MN to the protection and responsible utilization of natural resources

APPENDIX B

Question 9. *Please identify, by name, southeast Minnesota organizations, associations, activities, or special interest groups in which you actively participate (now or recently)*

21st Century Partnership in Rochester	Chamber of commerce
3 Rivers Community Action	Chamber of Commerce-Winona
4-H	Charities
Addressing Committee	Cherry Grove Township
Ag Alliance of SE MN	Cherry Grove Township Planning & Zoning Committee
Ag Star	Child Resource & Referral
Agriculture	church activities
American Association of University Women	Church
American Legion	Church Audit Committee
AMME-Alliance for New MN Micro-Enterprises	Church council
Amsted Co. Planning Advisory Commission	church groups
apple blossom overlook park board/design	Citizens for Responsible Growth
apple crisp coop	City Clerk Treasurer
Arc SE MN	City Council
Area Council of Churches	City Council Member
ASMC	City Councils/ governments
Association of University Women	City EDAs
Austin City Council	City Environmental Quality Committee
Basin Alliance for Lower Mississippi in MN (BALMM)	City government
Big Woods Project	city government-clerk
Bloomfield Mutual	City Heritage Preservation Commission
Bluff Country	City of Fuontain
Bluff Country Tourism	City of Hammond
Bluff County Co-op	City of Rushford Village-Clerk
Bluffland Whitewater Organization	City of Stewartville
Board member of MN Dairy Initiatives SE Region	city of Winona Env. Quality Committee
Board of Directors, Winona Hearts	City of Winona Projects
Boy Scouts	City Planning Commission
Bread of Life Church	Civitan
Caledonia Chamber of Commerce	clerk of Rollingstone Township
campaigning for MN House	Co. Board of Adjustment
Cannon Falls Area League of Women Voters	Co. Red Cross Disaster Team
Cannon Falls School Board	combined charities drive
Cannon Falls Sportsmen Club	Common RIVER Watershed Partnership
Cannon Valley Fair	common visions
Cannon Valley Watershed	Communities in School Board
Canon River Watershed	Communities United for Responsible Energy
Cascade Meadows Wetlands Project	Community Health Advisory Board
Cascade Township Officer	Community Presbyterian Church
Cattlemen Association	conservation
Central Lutheran church	Corn Growers of MN
Centro Campisino	Cornucopia Art Center-Lanesboro

County Cattlemen's Association Board
County Commissioner activities
County comprehensive local water planning
County Commissioners
County government
County Planning
County water plan committee
county Wetland Program
Crooked Creek Watershed District
cultural organizations
Dairyland Beef Producers Association
DFL party
District 196 Parent Leader Board
Diversity Council
Dover Township Clerk
Downtown Main St. Council
Driftless Area Initiative
Ducks Unlimited
Dusbrough Township
Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center
Economic Development Agency (zumbrot).
Economic Development Authority
EDA director of city of rushford
EDA of Eyota
EDA of Wabasha
EDA/HRA
EDA-Kenyon
education
education organizations
Eitzen Lions Club
Elba Coop Creamery Board
Elder Network
Election Judge
Elevator Board Farmers Co-op
Elgin Township Board
Elgin-Millville Scholarship Committee
Elks Club
Elmira Township
Environmental Connection
Experiment in Rural Cooperation
Extension
FACE Olmsted Co.
Fair Board
Fairboards
Family Connections Governing Board
Farm Beginnings
Farm Bureau
Farm Tours
Farmers Union
Farming with Nature Coop

Fillmore Co. Collaborative
Fillmore Co. Family Services Board
Fillmore County Zoning Committee
Fire Department
Fire Department-Kenyon
Fire warden, Houston counties
First Responders
Food Cooperative
Friends of Public Library
Friends of the Cannon River Wilderness
Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge
Friends of Whitewater
FSA committee
Full Circle Organic Growers Co-op
Garden Club
Garness Trinity Church
Garten Marketplatz
Girl Scouts
Glasgow Town Board
Glasgow Township Clerk
Golf course board
Good Earth Village
Goodhue co. Planning Commission
Goodhue Co. Soil and Water
Goodhue County EDA
Goodhue County Education District Board
Goodhue County Historical Society
GOP
government
Great River Ridge Recreational Trail Management Committee
Greater Rochester Area University Center
Green Party
GROWS (Gardeners Reaching Out With Service)
gun club
Habitat for Humanity
Hands for Humanity
Harmony Area Historical Society
Harmony Area Promotions Association
Harmony Garden Club
Hiawatha Sustainable Good Cooperation
Hiawatha Sustainable Woods Cooperative
Hiawatha Valley Audobon Society
Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center
Hiawatha Valley Resource Conservation Development Association
Highland Cattle Association
Historic Bluff Country
historical society
Hokah Township
Holden Township
Homer Township

Household Hazardous Waste Advisory Committee
Houston Chamber of Commerce
Houston Co Ag Society
Houston co. Chapter of National Wild Turkey Federation
Houston Co. Forage Council
Houston County 4-H
Houston county Cattlemens
Houston county EDA
Houston County Family Collaborative
Houston county Farm Union President
Houston County IEIC
Houston County School to work Committee
Houston County SWCD
Houston Lions Club
Houston Rural Fire Board
Initiative Fund
ISD 299 School Board
Izaak Walton League
JC's
Jewel Project
Kellogg Area Handspinners
Kenyon Bike Trail Steering Committee
Kenyon Commercial Club
Kenyon Wanamingo Educatin Foundation
Kiwanis
Kiwanis's Club of Winona, Sunrisers
Knights of Columbus
La Crescent Chamber of commerce
Lake City EDA
Lake City Environmental learning program
Lake City Sportsmens Club
Land Stewardship Project
Land Stewardship Project
land use ordinances
Land Use Plan Committee
Lanesboro & Rochester chamber of commerce
Lanesboro Art Council
Lanesboro city council
Lanesboro CVB
Lanesboro School Board
Lanseboro Center for the arts
League of MN Cities
League of Women Voters
Lewiston Netura Schools
Lewistown Sportsmans club
LGA (Local Government Annexation)
Lions Club
Little Valley Cemetary Board
LMC
Local Celebration Committees
local charities
Local church
Local Dairy Committee
Local Economic Development Authorities
local environmental group
Local Government City and County
local legion
Local Planning & Zoning
Local Watershed Committee
Maltby Nature Preserve
MASA
Mayors' Council
Mayville Township Chairman
MCFOA
MCPZA
meetings regarding industry/clean air & water
Member of EDA of MN
Mennonite Fellowship
milk co-op
Millville American Legion
Millville Sportsman Club
Mississippi Valley Partners
MN Agri Growth council
MN Alliance for conservation & Resource M
MN Apple grower's Association
MN Association of Professional Economic Developers
MN Cattlewomen
MN dairy initiatives
MN DFL State General Committee
MN Environmental Partnership
MN Farm Bureau
MN Forage & Grassland Council
MN Forest Resource Council
MN Jr. Heifer classic Association
MN Land Trust
MN Milk Producers
MN Naturalist Association
MN Newspaper Association
MN Parks & Trails Council
MN Pork Producers Association
MN Private Colleges Council
MN Project
MN State College Faculty Association
MN State Legislature
MN Township Association
MN Women's Political Caucus
Mower Co. Family Services Advisory Committees
Mower County Health Advisory Committee
MSBA
Murdog Foundation

National Eagle Center/Eagleworth
 National Farmer Organization
 Nature Conservancy
 Newspaper organization
 NFIB
 NFO
 Non-profits
 NRCS
 Oak Savannah landscape team
 Oakwood Township Clerk
 Olmsted Co Area Townships
 Olmsted County Board
 Olmsted County Extension
 Olmsted County Green Party
 Olmsted County Parks
 Olmsted County Township Association
 OMEGA
 Ordinances Committee
 Orion Township Board
 Orion Township Planning and Zoning committee
 PADCO-Plainview Area Development Corporation
 Parkview Elementary Advisory Council
 PHASE (partners in agriculture & development)
 Plainview Area Development Corporation
 Plainview Migrant Council
 Plainview Writing Center Project
 Plainview Youth Center Union
 Plainview's West Broadway Council
 Planning & Zoning
 Planning Commissioner
 Pleasant Grove Township Board
 Pleasant Valley Church
 DML Health & Human Services policy committee
 Political Party
 Pork Producers Association
 Prairie visions
 Preston Ambulance Service
 Preston City Council
 Preston Historical Society
 Preston Lions Club
 Private development groups
 Project FINE
 Promotional group for our city
 Public Health Advisory committee
 RAM
 RCTC Foundation
 Recycling Association of MN
 Red Cross
 Red Wing Area Fund of the St. Paul Foundation
 Red Wing Schools

Regent
 Regional Gov Association
 Regional Jail Study Committee
 Regional Mayor Meetings
 Regional Municipal Clerks Officers As
 religion
 Rice Co. Forestry Committee
 River Bend Nature Center
 Riverview Cemetary Board
 Rochester Chamber of Commerce
 Rochester community & technical college
 rochester multi housing association
 Root River Saddle Club
 Root River Soil & Water Cons. District
 Root River Woodland Council
 Rotory
 Rural American Arts Partnership
 Rural Electric Cooperative
 Rural Fire Department
 Rushford Community Foundation
 Rushford Institute for Nannotechnology
 Rushford Lutheran Chuch
 Saddleclub Association (SEMCA)
 School Board
 school board in Wabasha
 School to Work
 schools
 SD861 Financial Working Group
 SE Grain & Feed Dealers Association
 SE Housing Network
 SE MN Ag Alliance
 SE MN Area Agency on Aging Board
 SE MN Association of Townships
 SE MN Citizens Action Council
 SE MN Ethanol Coop
 SE MN Food Network
 SE MN League of Cities
 SE MN League of Municipalities
 SE MN Marketing collaborative
 SE MN Migrant Housing Coalition
 SE MN Resources Board
 SE MN Sheep Producers
 SE Regional 4-H Extension Educators
 SE Regional Continuum of Care
 SE Water Resources Board
 SEMAC
 SEMAC Board
 SEMAC panelist
 SEMAC/Three Rivers Community action Agency
 SEMDC

SEMWRB
 Sertoma
 SFA
 SG Area Past Present Future, Civic Organization
 Share holder local co-op
 Sierra Club
 Sisters of St. Francis Rochester
 Small Business Development Center
 Snowmobile Group
 Soil & Water Conservation District
 Soil & Water Conservation Society
 Soil and Water District Board
 South Country Health
 South Zumbro Waterhed Joint Powers Board
 South Zumbro Watershed Partnership
 Southeast Development
 Southeast Mn Ag Alliance
 Southeast Mn Food Network
 Southeast MN Service cooperation
 Southeast MN Training Consortium
 Southeast Service Coop Administrative Advisory Council
 Southeastern League of MN Cities
 Southeastern MN Association of Regional Trails
 Southeastern MN Development Corp Rushford
 Southeastern MN Principals Group
 Southeastern MN State Parks Friends Group
 Southern MN Environmental Education Committee
 Southern MN Initiative Foundation
 Spring Grove School
 Spring Grove City Council/EDA
 Spring Grove township clerk treasurer
 Spring Valley Chamber of Commerce
 St. Felix Catholic Churchq
 St. Mary's University of MN
 St. Patrick's Catholic Church
 St. Peter's Parish
 St. Rosia Church Guild
 state legislature
 state representative
 Sumner Township Board
 suport political candidates
 Sustainability working on forming local groups
 Sustainable Ag Association
 Sustainable farming
 Sustainable Farming Association
 SWCD
 TCPA
 The MN Project
 Three Rivers community Action
 Toursm Center
 Town Board
 town board superintendent
 Town Clerk
 Township Board
 Township Chairperson
 township clerk
 Township Cooperative Planning Association
 Township Director
 township government
 Township Officer
 Township Officers Association
 Township Supervisor
 Township-Hig Forest
 Trail authorities
 Trustee at church
 U of M Extension Committee
 U of M Extension Service
 UNITE 196 Education Advocacy-Parents United
 United Methodist church
 United Way
 University of MN Herd testing program
 University of MN
 Upper Mississippi Basin Network Coalition
 Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee
 USFWS
 Variaboard of County
 Variance Board & Planning Commission
 variety of grazing groups, projects
 VFW
 Volunteer Ambulance
 Wabasha Co Farm collaborative
 Wabasha Co. ADA
 Wabasha Co. Cattlemens
 Wabasha Co. Cattlemen's Assoc.
 Wabasha Co. Pork Producers
 Wabasha County & MN Historical Society
 Wabasha County CDC
 Wabasha county Collaborative
 Wabasha County Regional Raildroaid Authority
 Wabasha County Republican Party
 Wabasha Regional Rail
 Wabasha Rod and Gun Club
 Wanamingo Sportsmen Club
 Wanger Prairie Lutheran Church
 Waseca Research Center at U of MN
 Water Quality Committee
 Waterford Township
 Watershed work
 Wells Creek Watershed
 Wells Creek Watershed

Wells Creek Watershed Partnership
West Broadway Development Committee
Whitewater Township
Wildlife Organizations
Windustry
Winona
Winona Area Humane Society
Winona Area Joint Coordinating Committee
Winona Area Public Schools
Winona Chamber of Commerce
Winona Co. Park Board
Winona County
Winona County Apple Blossom Drive Park Committee
Winona County Water Planning
Winona School to Work Board
Winona soccer association
Woodland Industries Advisory Committee
Workforce Development Inc. Board
Ye Olde Opera House, Community Theatre
York Township
Youth Group Leader
ZED Advisory
Zoning Board for Township
Zoning committee
Zumbra Valley Woodland Council

APPENDIX C

Question 17, responses listed as "other." *With what kinds of things does the organization in which you are most involved need assistance?*

- Membership growth
- Consensus Building
- participation
- business experience
- legal assistance
- road and bridge repair money
- data processing
- membership recruitment
- tourism
- lobbying
- public participation
- jobs-economic development

APPENDIX D

Question 21, responses listed as "other." *In general, what is your reaction to the term sustainable development?*

- a term that creates road blocks to begin necessary projects
- provided by those who prefer business as usual-profit ahead of people
- another "buzz word" for GOOD PLANNING
- when I hear the term I think of "hope for the future generations"
- good but clouded-but does it work?
- a concept used to further agendas and use incorrectly by definition
- only concept that will insure all of humanity will survive its own ignorance and ineptitude
- not sure
- need more info to make decision

APPENDIX E

Question 22. *Please list projects, businesses, individuals, groups or programs you are aware of that approach agriculture and natural resource practices creatively and have potential to contribute to a positive future for southeast Minnesota.*

1000 Friends of MN	EDA
21 board members of SMART	Ethanol plant in Preston
4-H Programs	Ethanol plant near Claremont
Adult Farm Management	Experiment in Rural Cooperation
Ag Alliance of SE MN	Extension
Ag niche markets like organic farmers	Extension Agents
apple seconds to Byerly's & Lund's	Extension best practices research
Arden Environmental Engineering	Farm Beginnings
Art Thicke	Farm Bureau
AURI	Farm Bureau Org
Badgersett Research Farm	Farm Service Agency
BALMM Pheasants Forever Group	Farmers Union
BALMM	FFA
Banks	FFA Advisors
Big Woods Farm Community Supported Agriculture	First National Bank of Plainview
Big Woods Project	Foldcraft employee-owned company in Kenyon
bike trails	Forage and Grass Land Council
Blandin Leadership	forestry cost share programs
BLEW	forestry plans
Bluff County coop	Fritz Brietenbach
Burt's Meats in Eyota	Fruit Acres, Inc.
BWSR	FSH Soil & Water Conservation
Cannon River Watershed Partnership	Garten Marketplatz
Centro Campesino	Gary Holthaus-writer
church groups	Gary Rudalon
Clean Water Association	Grass Based Farming
Clean Water Coalition	Grazing Group
County commissioners and zoning officials	heirlooom vegetable nursery
community tourism development	Hiawatha Wood Co-op
Comprehensive Conservation Planning	Historic Bluff Country
Co-ops	Holistic Management
County Zoning/Planning	Hormel Nature Center
Dakota Open Space referendum	Houston County Chapter American Dairy
DDL	Houston County Dairy Round Table
Dept of Ag	Ike's
District One Township Government	In Harmony Foods Creamery
DNR	Izaak Walton League
DNR sponsored programs	Jeff Davidson, Kenyon
DNR bike trails	Jim Eddy, President of Upper Mississippi
Driftless Area Initiative	Joel Wager- DNR
Ducks Unlimited	Lake City Environmental Learning Program
Dushee Creek Dairy	Lake City Windustry
Dwight Ault	Land Stewardship Project
Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center	Land Trust

land use
 Leave No Trace
 Lisa and Eric Klien
 lobbying against annexation
 local sportsmen
 local theatres
 locally owned banks
 MACRM
 Marge Wartheson
 Marie marvin, owner of Crossin
 MAST Program
 Maureen Holst
 MDA Sustainable Ag Program
 Midwest Food Alliance
 Minnesota Project
 Minnesota State Cattlemen Association
 Mississippi River Park Way Com
 Mississippi River Revival
 MN Apple Growers Association
 MN Dairy Initiatives Program
 MN Forest Resource council
 MN Land Stewardship Project
 MN Land Trust
 MN Project
 MN State Horticultural Society
 MNSCU Farm Business Management Program
 Nanotechnology-Rushford
 National Eagle Center
 National Farmer Organization
 Naturalist Interpretation Prog
 Neman Ranch Pork
 New Farm Program (SWCD-NRCS)
 NFO
 Non-traditional farmers
 Oak Center Emu Farm
 Organic certification agencies
 Organic crop raising
 Pastureland
 Paul Aarsvold, Plainview Schools
 Peter Denzer
 PHASED
 Pheasants Forever
 Picture it Painted grant
 Prairie Advocates
 Prairie Visions
 Prarie Moon Nursery
 Quail Unlimited
 raising pigs in open
 Rebekah's
 Rep Greg Davids
 Rich Malinowski-La Crescent Architect
 Riverwise
 Root River Watershed Project
 rotational grazing for dairy cattle
 R-P School
 Rural American Arts Partnershi
 SC Service
 SE MN Ag Alliance
 SE MN Dairy Initiatives
 SE MN Development
 SE MN Food Network
 SE MN Initiative Fund
 SE MN Marketing collaborative
 SE MN Rural Economic Development Committee
 SE MN Water Resource Board
 Seed Savers near Iowa
 SEMA
 SEMAC
 SEMCHRA
 Senator Kenric Scheevel
 SFA
 Sheck Mill should be restored
 Sig Anderson
 sink hole research
 Sno-Pac Foods
 Soil and Water Conservation Districts
 Soil Conservation
 Southeastern MN league of Municipilaties
 Steve Crickson
 Steve Sviggum
 Sustainable Ag Groups
 Sustainable Agriculture Project
 Sustainable Farmers Association
 sustainable farming
 Sustainable Farming Association
 Sustainable financing for rural MN
 SWCD
 Terry Kissner
 The MN Project
 Tim Grossman
 Tom Anderson Riverland Technical Co
 Tony Smith
 tourism
 Tourism-campgrounds, B&Bs, etc.
 Township Board
 Trout Unlimited
 Trout Unlimited
 U Land Development Program
 U of MN
 UMOS, Inc.

USDA Resource Conservation & Development Program
USDA- Rural Development
Wabasha Rod and Gun Club
Waterford Township
Watershed management board
Wells Creek Watershed
Wells for Watershed Partnership
Whitewater State Park Interpretive Center
Whitewater Watershed Program
WIC Farmer's Market vouchers
wind energy
Wind Energy Project/ Rural Community Independence
Winona County
Winona County Planning Office
Zumbro Land Causeway

APPENDIX F
2002 Survey Instrument

Experiment in Rural Cooperation

Please return the filled out survey in the enclosed postage paid envelope *within one week*.

1. What is your primary occupation, business or public role in southeast Minnesota?

2. How long have you lived in southeast Minnesota? (circle one letter)

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a) Less than 5 years | d) More than 20 years |
| b) 6-10 years | e) Do not live in southeast Minnesota |
| c) 11-20 years | |

3. What issues do you think are most important to southeast Minnesota's future? (circle all that apply)

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| a) Tourism | e) Wildlife |
| b) Agriculture | f) Economic Development |
| c) Natural resources | g) Rural/Small Town Life |
| d) Forestry | h) Other,
specify _____ |

4. In the long run, what is your assessment of the future of southeast Minnesota? (circle one letter)

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| a) Quality of life will improve | c) Quality of life will deteriorate |
| b) Quality of life will stay about
the same | d) Unsure/don't know |

5. In your opinion, what are the three biggest problems facing southeast Minnesota's future?

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

6. What do you consider to be southeast Minnesota's three most important assets or strengths?

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

7. What do you think would be the most valuable contributions that an organization like the Experiment in Rural Cooperation could make to shaping a positive future for southeast Minnesota? (please circle only the *two* contributions you consider most important)

- a) Sponsoring alternative projects in agriculture, natural resources, forestry, tourism, etc.
- b) Making existing support programs more accessible and integrated
- c) Supporting small businesses, food ventures, and other agriculture related initiatives
- d) Supporting research on agriculture and natural resources issues
- e) Developing new projects or programs
- f) Undertaking a few really large projects (i.e. economic development strategies)
- g) Other, please list: _____

8. How important is it to you to have each of the following issues addressed in southeast Minnesota in the near future? (circle one response for every item)

	High Importance	Medium Importance	Low Importance	No Importance	Don't Know
Weakening agricultural economy	1	2	3	4	5
Environmental deterioration (water, soil, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing land use restrictions	1	2	3	4	5
Land value pressures from outsider demand	1	2	3	4	5
Loss of family farms	1	2	3	4	5
Decreasing financial independence of farmers	1	2	3	4	5
Migrant worker housing	1	2	3	4	5
Loss of main street businesses	1	2	3	4	5
Barriers to attracting new business	1	2	3	4	5
Insufficient availability of investment capital	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of good jobs in the regions	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of qualified workers	1	2	3	4	5
Tourism problems/stress on resources	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing and/or unfair taxes	1	2	3	4	5
Deteriorating economic conditions	1	2	3	4	5
Departure of young adults from the region	1	2	3	4	5
Needs of aging population going unmet	1	2	3	4	5
Deterioration of rural infrastructure (roads, sewers)	1	2	3	4	5
Loss of sense of community	1	2	3	4	5
Limited educational opportunities for children	1	2	3	4	5
Racial and/or ethnic tensions	1	2	3	4	5
Limited access to health care services	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of affordable housing	1	2	3	4	5
Other, please list _____	1	2	3	4	5

9. Please identify, by name, southeast Minnesota organizations, associations, government activities, or special interest groups in which you actively participate (now or recently).

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____

10. Which of the above organizations are you most involved in currently? (circle one letter corresponding to the organization in question 9) (a) (b) (c) (d) (e)

Please answer questions 11 to 16 for the organization you identified in question 10 as the one you are most involved in currently.

11. What issues are of primary concern to the organization in which you are most involved? (circle all that apply)

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| a) Land use | f) Agriculture | k) Natural Resources |
| b) Tourism | g) Education | l) Community and Family |
| c) Environment | h) Grants | m) Public Policy |
| d) Religion | i) Research | n) Information and referral |
| e) Government | j) Conservation | o) Lobbying |

12. In which of the following counties is the organization in which you are most involved active? (circle all that apply)

- | | | |
|------------|------------|----------|
| a) Wabasha | d) Filmore | g) Mower |
| b) Winona | e) Goodhue | h) Dodge |
| c) Houston | f) Olmsted | |

13. Does the organization in which you are most involved have sufficient resources to accomplish its purposes? (circle one letter)

- | | | |
|--------|-------|-----------|
| a) Yes | b) No | c) Unsure |
|--------|-------|-----------|

14. Does the organization in which you are most involved have access to the information it needs to carry out its purposes? (circle one letter)

- | | | |
|--------|-------|-----------|
| a) Yes | b) No | c) Unsure |
|--------|-------|-----------|

15. Rate the overall health and well being of the organization in which you are most involved. (circle one letter)

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| a) Growing vitality | b) Shrinking vitality | c) About the same over the years |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|

16. What sources provide important information to the organization in which you are most involved? (please circle only the *three* sources you consider most important)

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| a) Newspaper or magazines | f) Family, neighbors, friends | k) Libraries |
| b) Government Agencies | g) University of MN | l) Private companies |
| c) Meetings | h) Other higher education institutions | m) Other local organizations, churches, or civic groups |
| d) Internet or Web | i) Television | n) Radio |
| e) Elected Officials | j) Conferences | |

17. With what kinds of things does the organization in which you are most involved need the most assistance? (please circle only the *three* needs you consider most important)

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| a) Research | e) Education | h) Advocacy |
| b) Funding | f) Resource Integration | i) Grant Writing |
| c) Marketing | g) Info Gathering | j) Other, specify _____ |
| d) Planning | | |

18. How do you think that the University of Minnesota can make a significant and practical contribution to shaping a positive future for southeast Minnesota?

19. Please list instances, if any, where the University of Minnesota has been of value to you or southeast Minnesota.

20. The term sustainable development refers to practices that can be maintained over time without depleting the base resources required for ongoing development in the future. Please indicate your familiarity with the term. (circle one letter)

- a) Very familiar b) Somewhat familiar c) Not familiar

21. In general, what is your reaction to the term sustainable development? (circle one letter)

- a) No reaction e) A concept I support though I am uncomfortable with the term
 b) A good concept f) A concept I reject
 c) A good concept but clouded with negative overtones g) Other (specify)
 d) A confusing concept

22. Please list projects, businesses, individuals, groups, or programs you are aware of that approach agriculture and natural resource practices creatively and have potential to contribute to a positive future for southeast Minnesota.

a) _____
 b) _____
 c) _____
 d) _____
 e) _____
 f) _____

23. Would you be interested in attending a meeting to further discuss the issues raised in this survey? (circle one letter)

- a) Yes b) No c) Maybe

Thanks for your help!

If you wish to make additional comments, please attach an additional sheet of paper and return it with the survey

FIRST MAILING

Name
Organization
Address 1
Address 2
City, State Zip

October 14, 2002

Dear _____:

Three and a half years ago, most people receiving this mailing responded to a request to help the Experiment in Rural Cooperation set its original agenda by filling out an issues survey. In about a week, you will receive a 2002 survey to be filled out and returned. We are asking your opinions on issues in southeast Minnesota and what assets are key to the region's future. A strong, clear voice from southeast Minnesota is critical to making University of Minnesota resources as valuable as possible for practical purposes here at home.

The Experiment promotes University of Minnesota-based research, outreach and education as defined by community priorities. It supports local projects and businesses in agriculture and natural resources, including tourism and forestry. The aim is to foster a homegrown economy that will support self-reliant communities and a healthy natural environment. As a result of the survey that was completed a few years ago, hundreds of southeast Minnesota citizens and University of Minnesota students and faculty have participated in 50 projects. A partial project list is included with this letter, along with a description of the Experiment and a board of directors list.

The Experiment's work is carried out in partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension Service and a variety of other partners including the College of Agricultural, Food & Environmental Sciences; College of Natural Resources; Hubert H. Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs; Carlson School of Management; Institute of Technology; and others.

This letter is being sent to a select, representative group of citizen leaders, elected officials, civic and community groups, agricultural and conservation organizations, governmental agencies, churches and others. We would very much appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to fill out the survey when it arrives in a few days. Please contact us (or our staff, Dick Broeker, at 651-345-4336) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Experiment in Rural Cooperation Executive Committee on behalf of the Board of Directors

- Dean Harrington, First National Bank of Plainview
- Judy Gilow, Winona County Commissioner
- John Torgimson, Fillmore County Journal
- Larry Gates, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

FIRST MAILING, continued

**EXPERIMENT IN RURAL COOPERATION
PARTIAL LIST OF PROJECTS 1998-2002**

- Sustainable Financing for Rural Minnesota – an initiative to develop new sources of investment equity capital to support the region's homegrown economy
- Southeast Minnesota Food Network – a group of about 40 producers, farmers, growers and processors organized as a limited liability corporation to develop a regional food system
- Forested Landscape Initiative – a program to undertake research and management projects to enhance the forested acreage in southeast Minnesota
- Education for Sustainability – a project with the public school systems in southeast Minnesota to develop classroom and teaching materials focusing on sustainability
- Badgersett Research Farm – a research initiative to develop the considerable commercial potential of hybrid hazelnuts as regional woody agriculture crop
- Tourism Marketing – a support and capacity-building program for eight smaller tourism ventures in southeast Minnesota undertaking marketing research efforts
- Southeast Minnesota Farm Story project – a three-year initiative to identify the strengths, history, and future of farming in the region and key University of Minnesota resources
- Alternative Swine Housing – a farmer/University of Minnesota researchers roundtable series to develop less expensive swine housing options
- Waste Wood Study – research to examine opportunities for using waste wood as an efficient, environmentally sound source of rural home heating fuel
- Paradise Prairies Products – development of a community-based business using local food production to produce a line of foods for customers desiring high-quality specialty foods
- Wind Energy – the development of a model wind energy strategy (with possible hydrogen energy connection) to foster community self-reliance in Wabasha County area
- Down Lighting – a community advocacy project to encourage use of down lighting fixtures as a way to save energy and protect the night time sky as one of the region's natural assets
- Apple Crisp Cooperative – carrying out a marketing study involving 6 in-region orchards and developing a new apple pie product using Minnesota's Haralson apples
- Root River Market – establishing a community-based customer cooperative food market in Houston, Minnesota which had lost, over the years, all 5 of its grocery stores
- Rotational Grazing & Wild Bird Populations – a two-year research project focusing on grazing practices and their effects on the region's wild bird populations
- Organized U. of M. Student Field Days – an initiative to bring undergraduate agronomy students into rural areas to increase first-hand community-based knowledge
- Apple Blossom Drive Study – research into the developmental impacts and tourism realities along the sensitive bluff line property in Winona and Houston Counties

FIRST MAILING, continued

- Large Wood Burner – development of a model burner to handle large wood waste material and to supply energy to cook waste food for feeding hogs
- Southeast Minnesota Food Supply Chain Analysis – research on food product requirements and costs in marketing southeast Minnesota food to prospective buyers
- Energy Efficient Greenhouse – development of model greenhouse using less energy while expanding the vegetable growing season and increasing diversity of vegetable crops
- Finding Food in Farm County – extensive research into food production and food purchasing costs in southeast Minnesota with information on farm import and export data
- Consumer Research – an extensive region wide study of consumer interest in purchased locally produced foods and under what circumstances

FIRST MAILING, continued

Experiment in Rural Cooperation Board of Directors - 2002

Amanda Ludeman – Cannon Falls, Minnesota: Amanda is a recent St. Mary's graduate and teaches biology in the Cannon Falls public school system where her emphasis is on environmental education.

Mel Baughman – University of Minnesota/College of Natural Resources: Mel is an Assistant Dean and Extension Forester. His Extension work focuses on private forest landowners.

Donna Christison – Plainview, Minnesota: Donna and her husband are farmers outside of Plainview. She has served in numerous community volunteer leadership positions.

Mary Doerr – Kenyon, Minnesota: Mary owns and manages Dancing Winds Farm where she raises goats and operates a farmstay retreat as well as a grade A goat dairy and cheese plant.

Larry Gates – Kellogg, Minnesota (Board Secretary): Larry works for the Department of Natural Resources in Rochester where he specializes in watershed issues. He lives on an 160-acre farm near Kellogg.

Kathryn Gilje – Owatonna, Minnesota: Kathryn is co-director of Centro Campesino, a non-profit organization that addresses migrant agricultural worker issues in Southern Minnesota.

Judy Gilow - Winona, Minnesota (Board Chair): Judy is a Winona County Commissioner. She owns and operates a small business from the farm on which she and her husband live in rural Winona County.

Jeff Gorfine – Rochester, Minnesota: Jeff is a learner advocate for adult literacy in the Rochester Public Schools System. He has worked in numerous community-based programs.

Dean Harrington – Plainview, Minnesota (Board Treasurer): Dean is the President of First National Bank in Plainview. He is a Rural America Arts Partnership board director, a civic activist, and an avid reader.

Nick Nichols – Houston, Minnesota: Nick is the recycling coordinator for Houston County and involved in many civic groups including being designated as an Outstanding Young Minnesotan in 1998.

Sue Lantz – Hayfield, Minnesota: Sue owns, in partnership, Garten Marketplatz, a 10-acre perennial flower farm and retail shop near Byron. She lives on a farm with her husband and three children.

Roger Moon - University of Minnesota/College of Agricultural, Food & Environmental Sciences: Roger is a Professor of Livestock Entomology. He teaches and studies population ecology and management of arthropods.

Phyllis Onstad – Altura, Minnesota: Phyllis is a Regional Extension Educator serving eight southeast Minnesota counties. She and her partner are turkey growers and raise American Paint Horses.

Toni Smith – Wabasha, Minnesota: Toni is the County Extension Director for the University's Extension Service in Wabasha and Goodhue Counties and the 2002 Extension liaison to the Association of Minnesota Counties .

FIRST MAILING, continued

Ed Taylor – Lanesboro, Minnesota: Ed is a Fillmore County dairy farmer and works in partnership with his daughter and son-in-law. He has served as a Peace Corps volunteer and on several boards.

Judy Tollefsrud – Spring Grove, Minnesota: Judy lives on a beef farm in Houston County and is president of Minnesota Cattlewomen. She has also been involved with the disabled population for over 25 years.

John Torgrimson – Preston, Minnesota (Board Vice): John is the publisher of the FILLMORE COUNTY JOURNAL. He resides in rural Lanesboro and has extensive international experience.

Tim Wagar – Rochester, Minnesota: Tim is an Extension Educator for the University of Minnesota Southeast District Extension Office where he specializes in the areas of crops and soils.

SECOND MAILING

«Title» «First» «Last»
«Organization»
«Address»
«City», «State» «Zip»

October 18, 2002

Dear «Title» «First» «Last»:

A few days ago you should have received information about an issues survey being conducted by the Experiment in Rural Cooperation in southeast Minnesota. The Experiment funds University of Minnesota-based research, outreach and education defined by community priorities. The enclosed survey is being sent to a representative group of leaders and experts in southeast Minnesota. The goal is to identify key issues, resources, and problems that are important to the region's future. Your feedback will help us select projects that address your needs. We would greatly appreciate you taking a few minutes to fill out the survey and return it in the enclosed postage paid envelope **within one week.**

Your decision to fill out the survey is completely voluntary. Your responses to the questions will be kept private. The report that we will compile based on the survey responses will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you personally. Responses will not be connected to individual organizations. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only researchers will have access to the records.

Please contact Mel Baughman (612-625-1288) at the College of Natural Resources or Dick Broeker (651-345-4336) in Lake City if you have any questions about this survey. If you prefer to talk to someone other than the survey staff, you can contact the Research Subjects' Advocate line, at 612- 625-1650, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455.

If you return your survey, we will send you a summary report of the findings. Thank you for your time in helping us better understand the issues important to southeast Minnesota.

Sincerely,

**Experiment in Rural Cooperation Executive Committee on behalf of the Board of
Directors**

Dean Harrington, First National Bank of Plainview
Judy Gilow, Winona County Commissioner
John Torgrimson, Fillmore County Journal
Larry Gates, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

THIRD MAILING (postcard, sent October 25, 2002)

Dear Friend of Southeast Minnesota's Future:

If you have already returned the survey about issues in southeast Minnesota that we sent to you last week, thank you. If you have not had time to do so, we would very much appreciate you completing and returning the survey in the next few days. The Experiment in Rural Cooperation promotes University of Minnesota-based research, outreach and education to support self-reliant communities and a healthy natural environment. Your opinions are critical to making University resources as valuable as possible for practical purposes here at home in southeast Minnesota.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Dick Broeker in Lake City at 651-345-4336.

Thank you!

FOURTH MAILING

«Title» «First» «Last»
«Organization»
«Address»
«City», «State» «Zip»

November 12, 2002

Dear «Title» «First» «Last»,

Please forgive our persistence, but enclosed is a fresh copy of the issues survey we sent to you a few weeks ago. If you have recently returned the survey, thank you for your time and please disregard this letter.

We recognize that this is a very busy time of year for everyone, but urge you to take a few minutes to fill out the issues survey. The Experiment in Rural Cooperation promotes University of Minnesota-based research, outreach and education to support local projects and businesses in agriculture and natural resources.

Your input is very important for making University resources as valuable as possible here in southeast Minnesota. The Experiment in Rural Cooperation is funded by the Minnesota Legislature and led by a citizen board of directors committed to putting the University of Minnesota to work in our region. With your help, we can do an effective job of directing University of Minnesota resources to those priorities that mean the most to southeast Minnesotans.

Thanks so much for your time. We look forward to hearing from you. Another postage-paid envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Please feel free to contact Dick Broeker in Lake City at 651-345-4336 if you have any questions about the survey.

Sincerely,

Experiment in Rural Cooperation Executive Committee on behalf of the Board of Directors

- Dean Harrington, First National Bank of Plainview
- Judy Gilow, Winona County Commissioner
- John Torgrimson, Fillmore County Journal
- Larry Gates, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

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Experiment in Rural Cooperation Executive Committee on behalf of the Board of Directors

- Dean Harrington, First National Bank of Plainview
- Judy Gilow, Winona County Commissioner
- John Torgrimson, Fillmore County Journal
- Larry Gates, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

FIFTH AND FINAL MAILING, (postcard)

November 20, 2002

Dear Friend of Southeast Minnesota's Future:

If you have returned the issues survey about southeast Minnesota that we re-sent to you last week, thank you. This is our last mailing. We urge you to take a few minutes to complete and return the survey. Your opinions provide valuable information about how best to use University of Minnesota resources for practical purposes in southeast Minnesota. If you have questions, please contact Dick Broeker in Lake City at 651-345-4336. Thank you!

Larry Gates (Kellogg), Judy Gilow (Winona),
Dean Harrington (Plainview), John Torgrimson (Preston)
On behalf of the Experiment in Rural Cooperation