Arizona Cooperative Extension’s Community Resource Development Program

The Inter-mountain West is experiencing some of the most dramatic population growth and land development in the nation. From 1982 to 1997, the total amount of developed land in the region grew by 2 million acres, through conversion of agricultural land and natural open space. Arizona is no exception, more than doubling its population and tripling its employment between 1969 and 2003. Although much of this growth occurred in urban areas, many rural counties have also experienced rapid development. The resulting change in rural demographics and land use patterns has created new challenges to local and county governments, planners and ultimately the general public. These challenges include biophysical landscape changes, changing rural economies and the need for governments to provide services in previously undeveloped areas with limited tax revenues.

The primary purpose of the Community Resource Development (CRD) program is (1) to understand and ultimately model the regional environmental, economic and social changes that are accompanying rural transformation in Arizona; (2) to design projects that explain the likely outcomes of policy alternatives; and (3) to work with stakeholders and University of Arizona faculty to develop ventures that address unresolved high-priority issues.

Two CRD Agents are in place to create, apply and transfer multidisciplinary knowledge to help people understand community change and identify opportunities. The CRD program provides and facilitates public issues education so that citizens are actively involved in defining and contributing to the future of their communities and citizens are better informed about issues addressing use and management of natural resources, the rural-urban interface, economic development, natural disaster response, land use planning and local government structure and operation. The CRD Agents develop and generate information/data and conduct and evaluate educational programs on community issues that address priority needs of the county, state and nation.

Mark Apel serves as the Area Agent for Cochise, Graham, Pima and Santa Cruz Counties. He brings a planning approach to the CRD program as he was previously employed with the Cochise County Planning Department for ten years. His program areas include Land Use Planning and Sustainable Design, and Economic Impacts.

Erik Glenn is the Area Agent for Yavapai, Coconino and Mohave Counties. His background is in economic development and economic geography. His program areas include Small Acreage Landowner Education, Economic Development and Economic Analysis, and Land Use Planning.

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