

THE POWER OF RURAL PHILANTHROPY

Philanthropy Southwest
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TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

- **Success stories**
- **Gain ideas to replicate or emulate**
- **Strong partnerships**
- **Examine lessons learned**



DEFINING RURAL

???

“Any area that is not metro/urban”

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SPECIAL REPORT

Despite Dire Problems, Rural America Is Ignored by Many Philanthropies

The grant seekers are often at an inconvenient distance—physically, culturally, and psychologically—from city-centered grant makers

By STEPHEN G. GREENE

This summer's drought brought images of parched cornfields and stunted soybeans into urban living rooms and focused new attention on the plight of America's farmers. But many rural Americans, on and off the farm, have faced economic hard times for years—and some people believe that too many of the nation's philanthropies are ignoring them.

"Foundations that do rural funding can practically be counted on one hand," says Susan Seckler, a consultant to the Ford Foundation who studies rural issues at the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies in Washington.

And George Coling, co-chairman of the Rural Coalition, which represents more than 145 groups on rural-policy is-

ssues in Washington, says he advises organizations seeking foundation money to describe their programs as addressing environmental concerns, women's issues, health care—anything other than rural issues. With few exceptions, he says, "nobody funds rural."

It's not for lack of problems to tackle. Rural economic resources have been severely eroded in the 1980's. Prosperity may have returned to some large cities on both coasts, but the timber, fishing, and mining industries remain depressed in many areas, and many ranchers and farmers who survived earlier farm crises are now struggling to cope with effects of the drought.

The poverty rate in non-metropolitan counties last year was nearly 17 per

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RURAL PHILANTHROPY DAYS

25 years in Colorado



PAUL MAJOR

President and CEO



Telluride, CO

THE PRACTICE OF RURAL PHILANTHROPY

RURAL

Why Care?

- **Food**
- **Fiber**
- **Energy**
- **Our neighbors**

Status?

Failing

- **Persistent poverty and unemployment**
- **Declining/shifted local economies**
- **Lack of wealth creation**
- **Worse health outcomes**
- **Outmigration**

PHILANTHROPY AND RURAL

Why Failing?

- **Systemic and generational**
- **Lack of economic diversity**
- **Cultural**

What Have We Done?

- **Prescriptive grants**
- **Build physical capital (buildings); not human or financial**

Our Mistakes

- **Undervalued building relationships**
- **Too late leadership training – re-train and new leaders**

PHILANTHROPY WORKING IN RURAL

Fundamentals

- **Leveraging local assets (human, physical, financial and cultural capital)**
- **Local control**

Principles

- **Commit to building local capacity - support emerging leaders**
- **Listen/have honest conversations - collect good local data**
- **Commit to co-create**
- **Focus on building trust**
- **Be patient**
- **Commit to real and hard issues**
- **Build on local assets (local capital)**

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STAYING FOCUSED

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