

USDA Booklet Examines Rural Development Need

"As a Nation, we are now on the edge of developing national policies that will lead to a more balanced growth," Thomas K.

Cowden, Assistant Secretary for Rural Development and Conservation, comments in a booklet released recently by the USDA.

"Rural development is a component of an overall policy of national balanced growth."

The booklet, "National Growth, the Rural Component," is a compilation of papers presented at the National Workshop on Rural Development held in October 1971 at the University of Nebraska. The workshop was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges and the American Vocational Association.

The differences in rural communities, the role of small business in rural development, education and manpower training, rural housing and the role of community colleges are among the subjects covered in 21 presentations by college leaders, State officials, federal officials and others in the booklet.

In discussing the rural poor, Earle W. Moore, director of development, South Carolina State Committee for Technical Education, states:

"Any plan for rural development must provide for the special needs of the rural poor, who are ill-equipped for the competitive, rigorous life of the city. They need special assistance in job development, low income private housing, education and manpower training, child care, transportation, and health care services. In addition to the provision of these services, there must be an effective delivery system for these services."

In a paper on cultural opportunities in rural America, Otto G. Hoiberg, head of the community development Extension division at the University of Nebraska, comments:

"For years it has been a favorite pastime among feature writers and TV commentators to picture the small town as devoid of almost everything that makes life really worth living. These spokesmen are afflicted with what might be called a scrawny cat—tumbleweed syndrome relative to rural America.

"I am fully aware of the small-town problems which these reports so vividly portray; but I am equally aware of a positive side to rural America that needs to be more clearly understood."

The availability of cultural opportunities in rural America, he said, is greater today than ever before, due in large measure to increased mobility and to advances in communications technology.

In discussing rural health, Helen L. Johnston, rural health consultant, Community Health Service, Health Services and Mental Health Administration, notes:

"Among our larger educational institutions, medical students have been in the forefront in

recent years in breaking out of institutional walls. Sometimes the faculty has taken leadership. Sometimes it has had to be dragged in, more or less reluctantly. As the process of wall-breaking occurs, it provides new relevance for the school, and new excitement for both students and faculty. The work involved at times seems overwhelming, but the satisfaction of helping a local community meet a health challenge usually more than compensates for the effort."

Secretary for Rural Development in the USDA explained that the objectives of the workshop were:

- to help post-secondary schools find their role in rural development
- to provide a forum for significant rural development issues
- to develop a firmer liaison between USDA, the community colleges and vocational educators
- to further awaken government agencies and personnel to the potentials of education in rural development

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