

Taking The Pulse Of Rural Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK, ARK. Communities can no longer go it alone if they want to survive and grow, says Dr. Wayne Miller, extension economist/professor with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture.

“They can work on collaborative relationships with other communities to share resources and expertise and diversify their economies to remain competitive in the global economy,” said Miller.

That’s where the “Rural Profile of Arkansas” comes in handy.

The publication is published every other year by the division. The 2009 issue came out recently chock-full of statistical information presented in an easy-to-read and easy-to-understand format.

“Rural Profile provides indicators of important demographic, social and economic trends and identifies differences between conditions in rural Arkansas and urban areas of the state,” says Miller.

He said the profile is provided to state and local leaders to help identify issues that need to be addressed. Public sector leaders use it to set their policy and programs to address such issues as health care, education and employment.

The publication is an important reference in many offices across the state. It may not be a high-powered, blockbuster novel, but it has loyal readers. Many leaders can’t wait for up-to-date information, as attested to by Miller.

“We get phone calls asking when the new edition is coming out with the latest information and analysis of issues affecting rural Arkansas,” Miller said.

Dr. Milo Shult, vice president for agriculture with the Division of Agriculture, said the profiles

are a valuable source of data and information.

“In this issue, special attention is given to the stresses being exerted on households and state and local governments as a result of the ongoing national and international economic downturn,” Shult said.

“The profile is a tool leaders can use while planning and directing policies and programs for the present and for the future,” he said. “It’s the most current data and information available.”


The first issue, in December 1990, was created by a joint effort of the governor’s office, other state agencies, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundations and Cooperative Extension Service. Since 1997, the division has taken over publication and funding.

Tim WoolDridge, director of Arkansas Association of Public Universities, said the Rural Profile provides much needed information to help the association “as we work with policy makers. It’s very helpful to educators in confronting higher education needs.”


He said that the statistics indicate that communities should identify their resources and concentrate on enhancing local resources to help grow their communities, rather than put all their efforts in trying to recruit manufacturing jobs to save their communities.

For a copy of the 2009 Rural Profile of Arkansas, contact your county extension agent or order it online by going to <http://pubs.uaex.edu/pubsWebuser.asp>, enter your zip code, then enter the name of the publication.


An online pdf of the latest profile is at www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/PDF/mp474.pdf.



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