

---

# Homegrown Approaches to Creating Sustainable Economies

**Jonathan Q. Morgan**

**102<sup>nd</sup> NCACC Annual Conference**  
**Hickory, NC - August 28, 2009**



# Learning Objectives

---

- Understand what it means to have a more “sustainable” local economy
- Consider the potential of homegrown approaches to economic development
- Appreciate the linkages among homegrown approaches
- See applications in practical examples



# Sustainable Development

---

- Emphasizes development rather than growth only
- Focuses on the “triple bottom line”:
  - **Economy**
  - **Environment**
  - **Equity** (social and distributional issues)



# Growth vs. Development

---

## Quantitative:

*More*

- Jobs
- People

## Qualitative:

*Better*

- High-wage jobs
- Quality of life
- Diversification
- Sustainability



# What Makes ED Sustainable?

---

- The ED goals/outcomes a community pursues
  - Jobs and investment plus...
- The approaches/strategies/tools a community employs and how it does so
- Local resources and capacity to make it all happen



# Economic Development Goals

---

- More jobs; better jobs
- Private investment
- Tax base expansion
- Wealth creation
- Higher quality of life
- Higher standard of living



# Homegrown Approaches

---

- Relate to the local context of a place
- Leverage distinctive community assets
- Strengthen locally to attract externally



# Themes of Homegrown Dev.

---

- Know your niches
- Build on local strengths
- Grow your own
- Develop people and place
- Look within for economic opportunities



# Homegrown Approaches

---

1. Place-based Development
2. Creativity and Talent Cultivation
3. Economic Gardening



# Place-based Development

---

- Quality of life amenities
- Downtown development
- Specialized infrastructure
- Tourism development
- Arts and culture
- Resident and retiree attraction



# Creativity and Talent Strategies

---

- Arts and culture
- Workforce development
- Leadership development
- Social capital



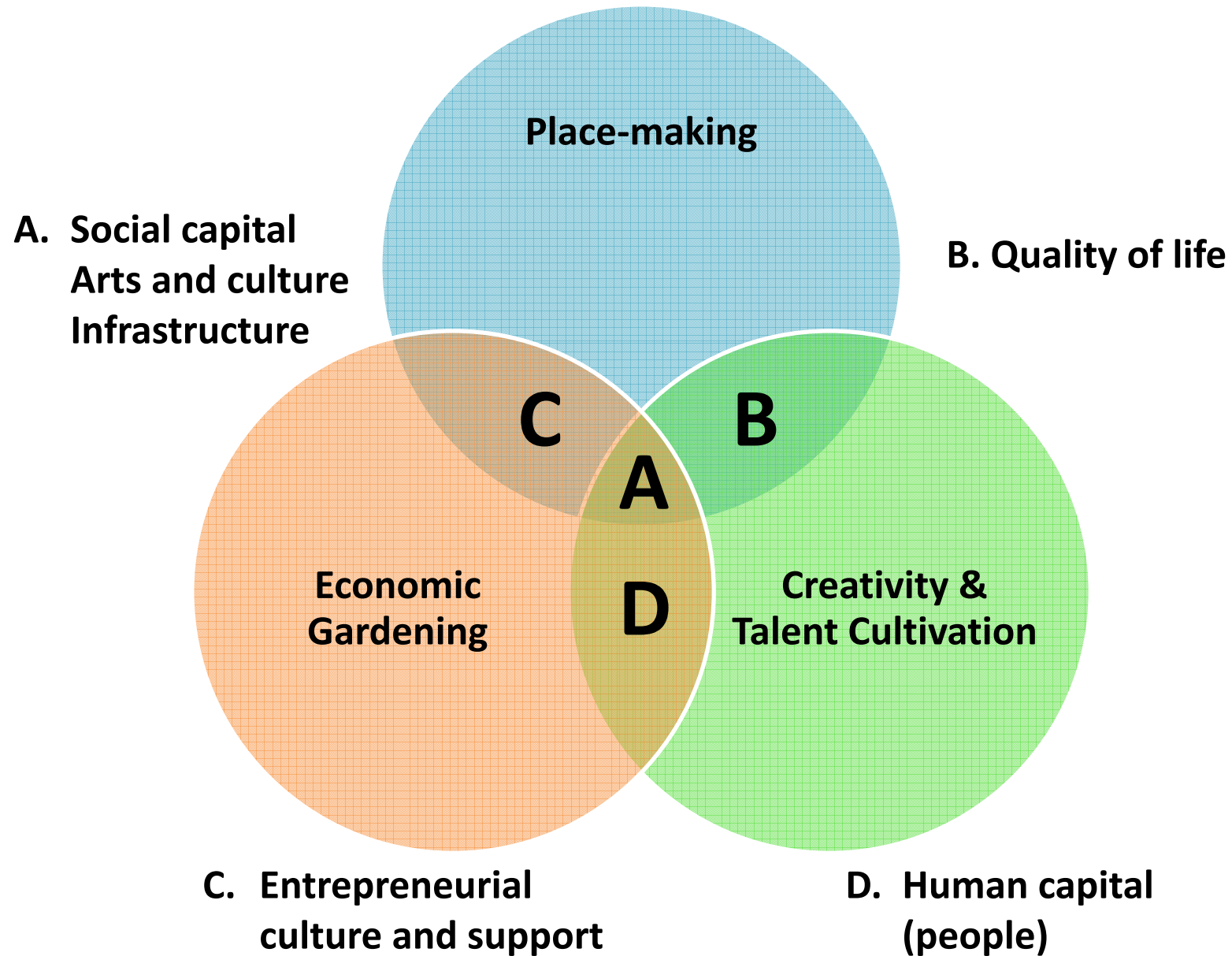
# Economic Gardening

---

- Entrepreneurship
- Information brokering
- Infrastructure
- Social capital
- Business incubators



# Homegrown Economic Development



# Homegrown Dev. in NC

---

**EDENTON:** Pop. 5,394 (Chowan County)

- *Residential development through historic preservation*
- Partnered with Preservation NC to transform a blighted cotton mill village
- Used CDBG funds to upgrade water/sewer
- The unique and historic mill homes have attracted artists and entrepreneurs



# Homegrown Dev. in NC

---

**AYDEN:** Population 4,620 (Pitt County)

- Comprehensive strategy for *downtown revitalization*
- Partnered with Main Street Program
- Improved streetscapes and expanded a facade grant program to attract businesses
- Branding: downtown Ayden is “Close to home, close to your heart”.



# Homegrown Dev. In NC

---

- **BREVARD:** Pop. 6,643 (Transylvania Cty.)
- *Supporting entrepreneurs*
- Using local retired business executives to provide consulting and assistance to existing small firms and start-ups



# Homegrown Dev. In NC

---

- **DILLSBORO:** Pop. 206; (Jackson Cty.)
- *Entrepreneurship support for local artisans*
- Using methane gas from the county landfill to power studios for artisans
- Incubator for fledgling artisans



# Suggested Reading

---

- ***Small Towns, Big Ideas***  
(Rural Center, UNC SOG)
- ***Rural Realities***, forthcoming  
Sept. 2009



# Contact Information

---

**Jonathan Q. Morgan, Ph.D.**

UNC School of Government

CB# 3330, Knapp-Sanders Bldg.

Chapel Hill, NC 27599

919-843-0972

[morgan@sog.unc.edu](mailto:morgan@sog.unc.edu)



# Entrepreneurship: the Homegrown Jobs Strategy That Works Anywhere

*N.C. Association of County Commissioners*

*Hickory, NC*

*August 28, 2009*

Presented by:

**Leslie A. Scott, Director**

**Institute for Rural Entrepreneurship**

**N.C. Rural Economic Development Center, Inc.**



# Entrepreneurship as a strategy

---

1. Successful entrepreneurs always leverage the assets, resources and momentum of the PLACE they choose to do business.
2. CREATIVITY is a mindset critical for continuous innovation and competing in the global economy. Public leaders need it too.
3. CREATING A CULTURE for entrepreneurship is possible anywhere. Harder in rural areas?



# Urban example

---

## *Place-based Assets + Creating a Culture*

***Research Triangle region, now the state's entrepreneurial hotbed***

- ***20 years ago the region had corporate R&D in information technology and bio-pharma, but no support system or buzz around startups***
- ***Council for Entrepreneurial Development has built a national model of a support network including focused content and venture finance***

***Now the region is a magnet for life sciences and IT entrepreneurs***

# Rural example

---

## *Place-based + Creativity + Support*

### ***Farmers Fresh Market, Rutherford County*** ***(county lost 3,000 jobs in 2 months last year)***

- ***Chefs at high-end restaurants in Charlotte want more & more locally grown organic & heirloom produce for their clientele***
- ***Farmers in the Isothermal region can grow practically anything if there is a market***
- ***An entrepreneurial person connects them***

## **Suburban example: the original Economic Gardening**

*Key Support is market data about Place*

***Littleton, Colorado's strategy since 1989:  
information, infrastructure, and connections***

- ***Many small businesses fail because they do not know and reach a clear market.***
- ***Technology and some funding for database acquisition allows focused analyses of competitors and customers.***
- ***Littleton shows businesses their own market data and helps them connect to markets.***

# Entrepreneurial leadership qualities

## *Different communities, same behaviors*

- ***Understand your place and its challenges relative to the competition.***
- ***Understand your assets, especially the successful entrepreneurs already there.***
- ***Be vigilant about looking for opportunity and leveraging resources. Make that everyone's job.***
- ***Build networks of everyone who benefits.***

# Why focus on entrepreneurs?

1. Traditional strategies are failing our distressed regions, which are losing income, population, and leadership.
2. Entrepreneurs are growing even in low-income communities. (See Rural Center/SBTDC study.)
3. Entrepreneurs are anchored in local communities. They create jobs and a better local quality of place, and they give back.
4. Entrepreneurs help build more sustainable, diverse and resilient local economies.



# What places need to support entrepreneurs

---

*Based on our research in 2003, as well as our statewide experience in the five years since then, including a \$2 million demonstration funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation:*

## ENTREPRENEURS NEED COLLABORATIVE SYSTEMS OF:

- Education and Training
- Technical Assistance and Information
- Access to Capital
- Entrepreneurial Networking
- Leadership and Policy Development



*Many types of leaders can play a role and make a difference*

# What local leaders can do

---

1. Look at your own local data. Your economy is mostly small businesses.
2. Meet your entrepreneurs. Recognize, champion and challenge them to be ambitious.
3. Plug them into resource networks. Memorize the Business Link NC's toll free number 800-228-8443.
4. Support your community college's Small Business Center. The best ones have local resources extending the stipend the state provides.
5. Learn entrepreneurial behaviors and recruit partners who have them.
6. Support entrepreneurship education for youth – they get it and help adults get it.



# For more information

---

*Please contact*

**Leslie A. Scott, Director**  
**Institute for Rural Entrepreneurship**  
**N.C. Rural Center**  
**(919) 250-4314**  
***Lscott@ncruralcenter.org***

**[www.ncruralcenter.org/entrepreneurship](http://www.ncruralcenter.org/entrepreneurship)**

