



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Center of North America Coalition (CONAC) REAP Zone

Lead Entity: Center of North America Coalition (CONAC), North Dakota

Demographics: Includes the counties of McHenry, Bottineau, Rolette, Towner, Pierce and Benson; and the Indian reservations of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa outmigration and areas of high poverty. Since 1980, all except Rolette County have experienced substantial population loss, with most in excess of 20%. Rolette County, home to the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation, has a poverty rate of almost 40%.

Background: North Dakota was selected as the first location to put in place a pilot program to search for ways to revitalize heavily farm dependent areas now suffering from outmigration and job loss. North Dakota is projected to lose 45,000 residents between 1990 and 2010. The agricultural production and extractive industrial within the state are in general decline. There is a perception within the state that there is inadequate support for entrepreneurial activity.

Purpose: The Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP), as a pilot program, was established to mitigate the negative effects of outmigration and lack of employment opportunities and job losses to rural communities. REAP Zones were also established to create an environment for communities and Indian reservations, together and separately, to find strategies to solve their own problems. The outcomes and lessons learned will help USDA to assist other communities throughout rural America experiencing similar challenges.

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