Module One: Launching SET & Building a Strong Regional Team  
Lionel J. Beaulieu, Purdue Center for Regional Development, Purdue University  
Neil Linscheid, University of Minnesota  
James Goodwin, Western Rural Development Center, Utah State University

Module Two: Exploring the Region’s Economic & Demographic Foundations  
Lionel J. Beaulieu, Purdue Center for Regional Development, Purdue University

Module Three: Focusing on Regional Competitive Advantage  
Alison F. Davis, University of Kentucky

Module Four: Exploring Strategies for Enhancing the Regional Economy  
Alison F. Davis, University of Kentucky  
Michael Wilcox, University of Tennessee

Module Five: Developing Your Vision and Goals  
Lionel J. Beaulieu, Purdue Center for Regional Development, Purdue University

Module Six: Discovering Assets and Barriers  
Lionel J. Beaulieu, Purdue Center for Regional Development, Purdue University  
Michael Wilcox, University of Tennessee

Module Seven: Planning for Success  
Rachel C. Welborn, Southern Rural Development Center, Mississippi State University

Module Eight: Measuring for Success  
Rachel C. Welborn, Southern Rural Development Center, Mississippi State University

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Finding ways to create, attract and retain jobs remains a challenging process in many rural counties today. This is especially true for counties that remain committed to a strategy of “out competing” their neighbors for economic opportunities, such as recruiting a firm to the area. Since many rural businesses must now contend with enterprises located across the globe, it is difficult to survive without linking resources into a more comprehensive economic development plan that builds on the region’s unique economic strengths and opportunities. In a nutshell, that is what the Stronger Economies Together (SET) initiative is all about.

SET is intended to help strengthen the capacity of communities/counties in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint for their multi-county region, one that strategically builds on the current and/or emerging comparative economic advantages of that region. The materials contained in this document serve as the core resources needed to get SET off the ground in a region. It includes eight modules, an instructor’s guide, a participant’s workbook and a variety of key evaluation instruments that can be used to track progress and outcomes over time. Module topics include building a regional team, developing a regional vision and goals, exploring the region’s economic advantages and opportunities, examining assets and barriers and planning/measuring for success. Modules that delve more deeply into some topics presented in the core modules or add important new material to complement the basic modules are being released on an ongoing basis. We urge you to visit the SET website in order to stay apprised of new or updated resources being released as part of the SET initiative. Visit http://srdc.msstate.edu/set/.

We want to caution you that embracing the SET process is no easy task. Regional teams must work over an extended period of several months to produce a sound plan, one that is the product of many people, organizations and institutions working together to create a better future for their region and its communities. However, the hard work is well worth it. The payoff is not only the creation of a high quality regional plan, but also a rigorous timeline for getting the important work of the region off the ground and sustained over time. We wish you much success in this important endeavor.

Lionel J. (Bo) Beaulieu and Rachel C. Welborn
Editors
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