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Agricultural Outlook Forum
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Presented: February 23-24, 2012

**Stronger Economies Together (SET)
Strategies for Building New Economic Opportunities**

Bo Beaulieu

Stronger Economies Together (SET)

Strategies for Building New Economic Opportunities

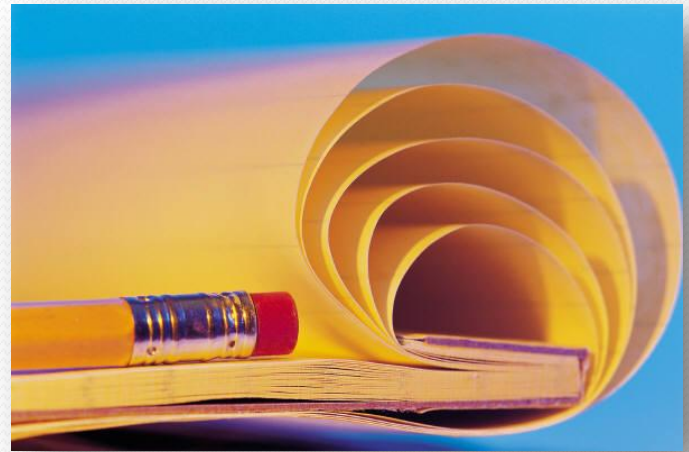
Bo Beaulieu, PhD

Southern Rural Development Center – Mississippi State University



Presentation Outline

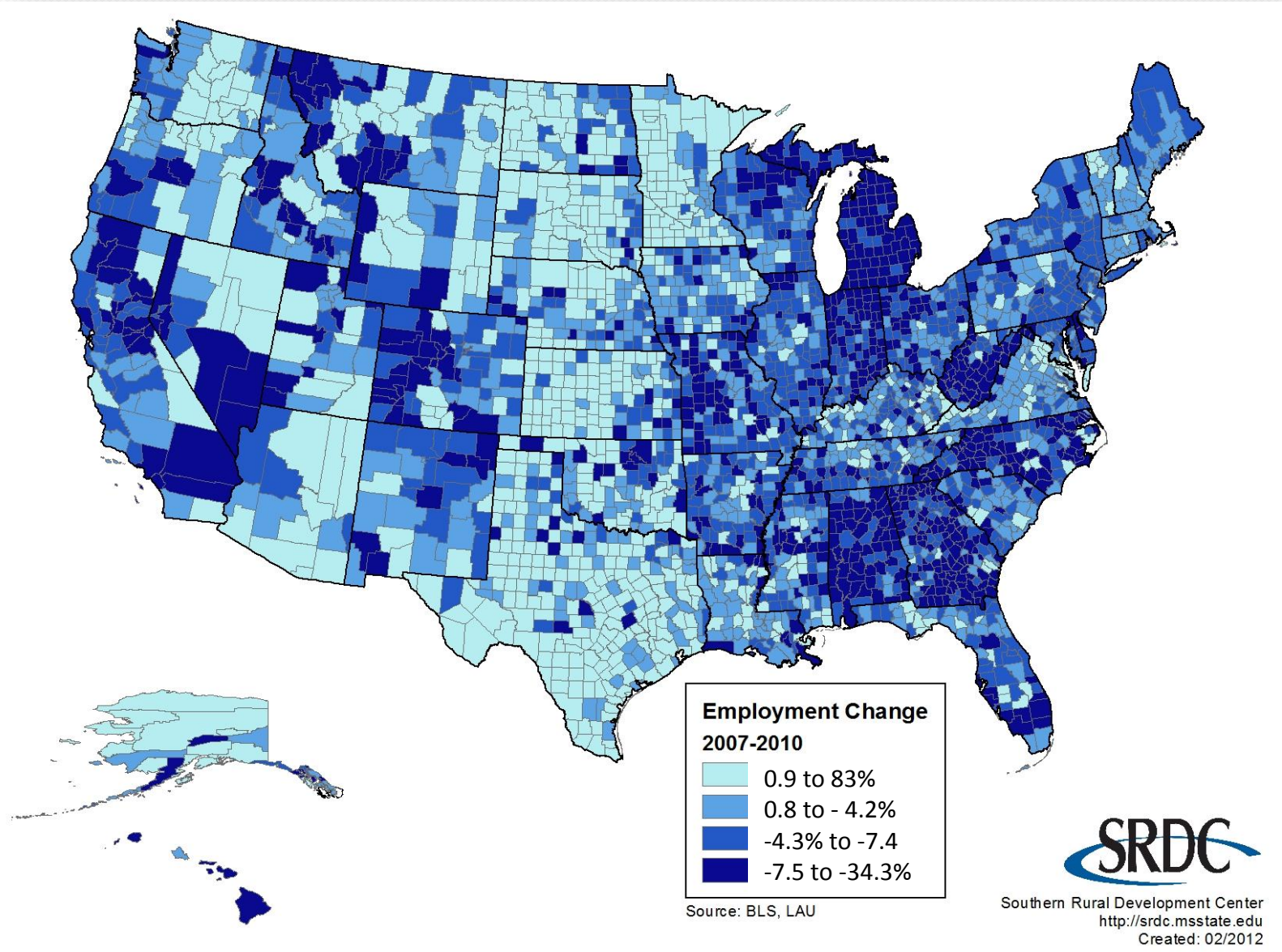
- A Changing Rural America
- SET: Key Elements
- Encouraging Signs
- What's Ahead



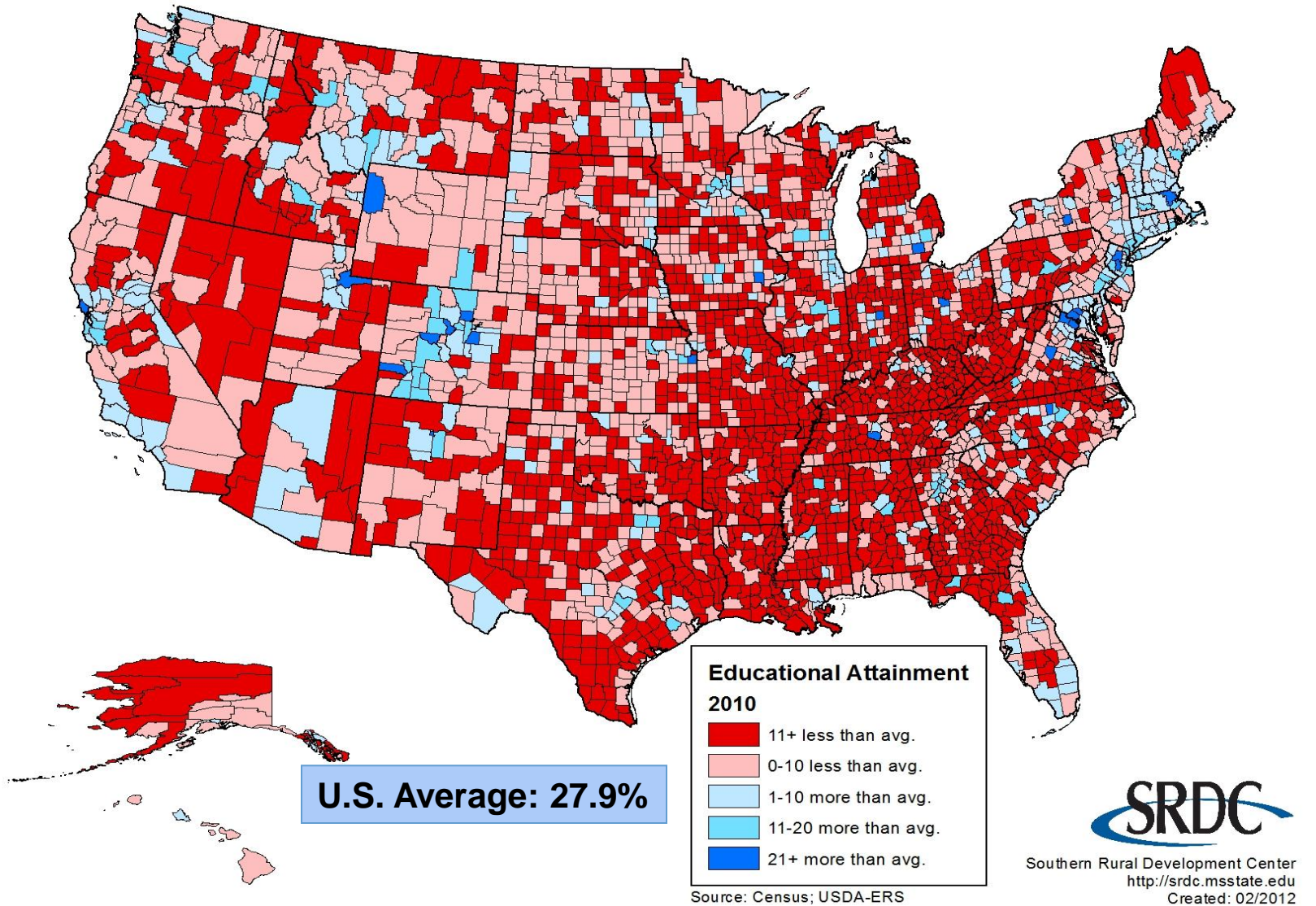
A Changing Rural America



Job Losses: 2007 - 2010



College-Educated Adults, 2010



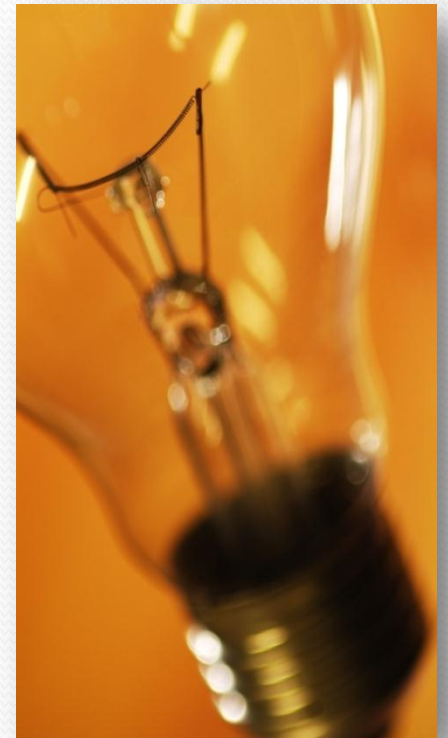
SET: Key Elements



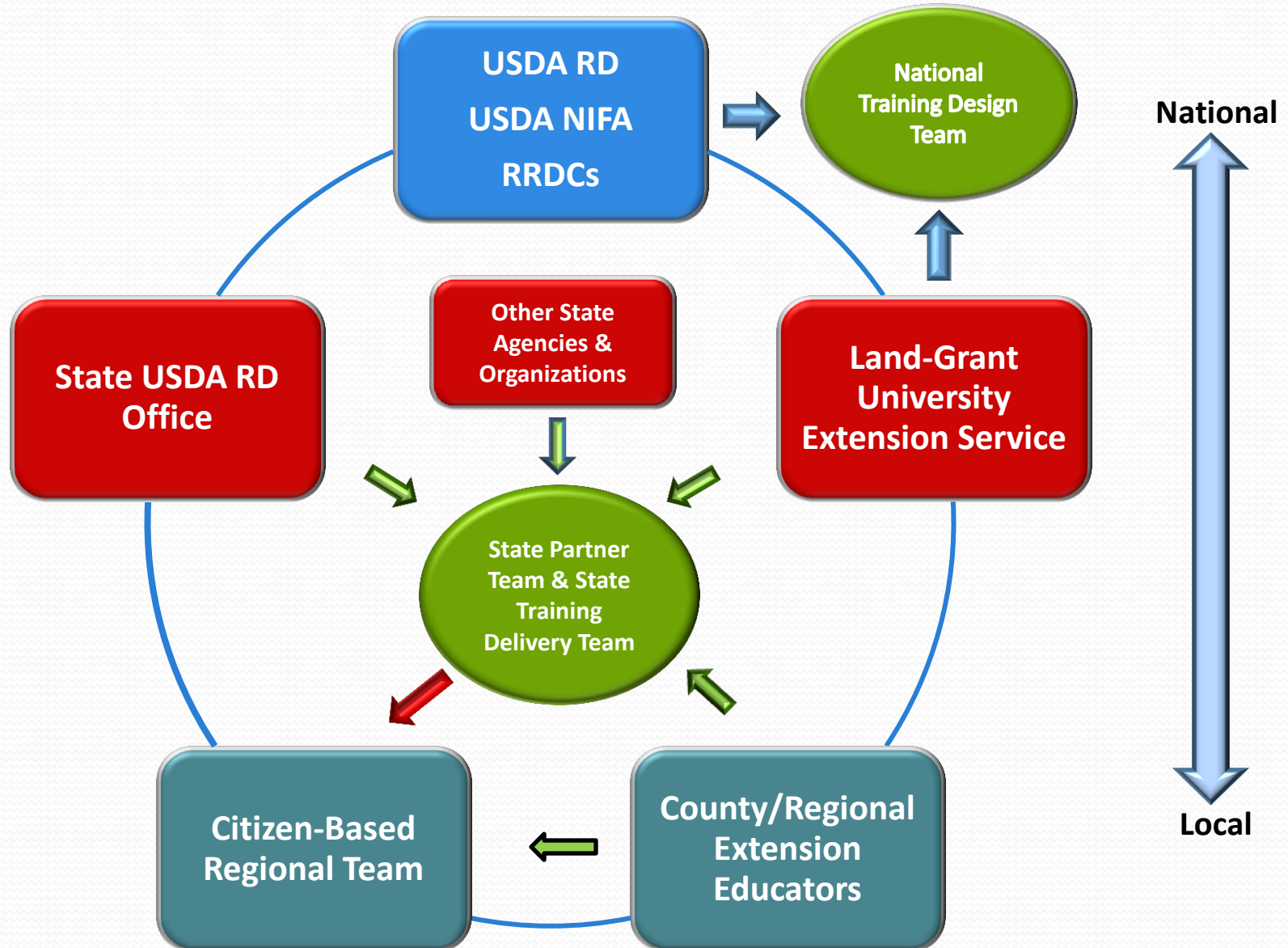
Purpose of SET

Help rural communities/counties work together as a regional team in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint that builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of their region.

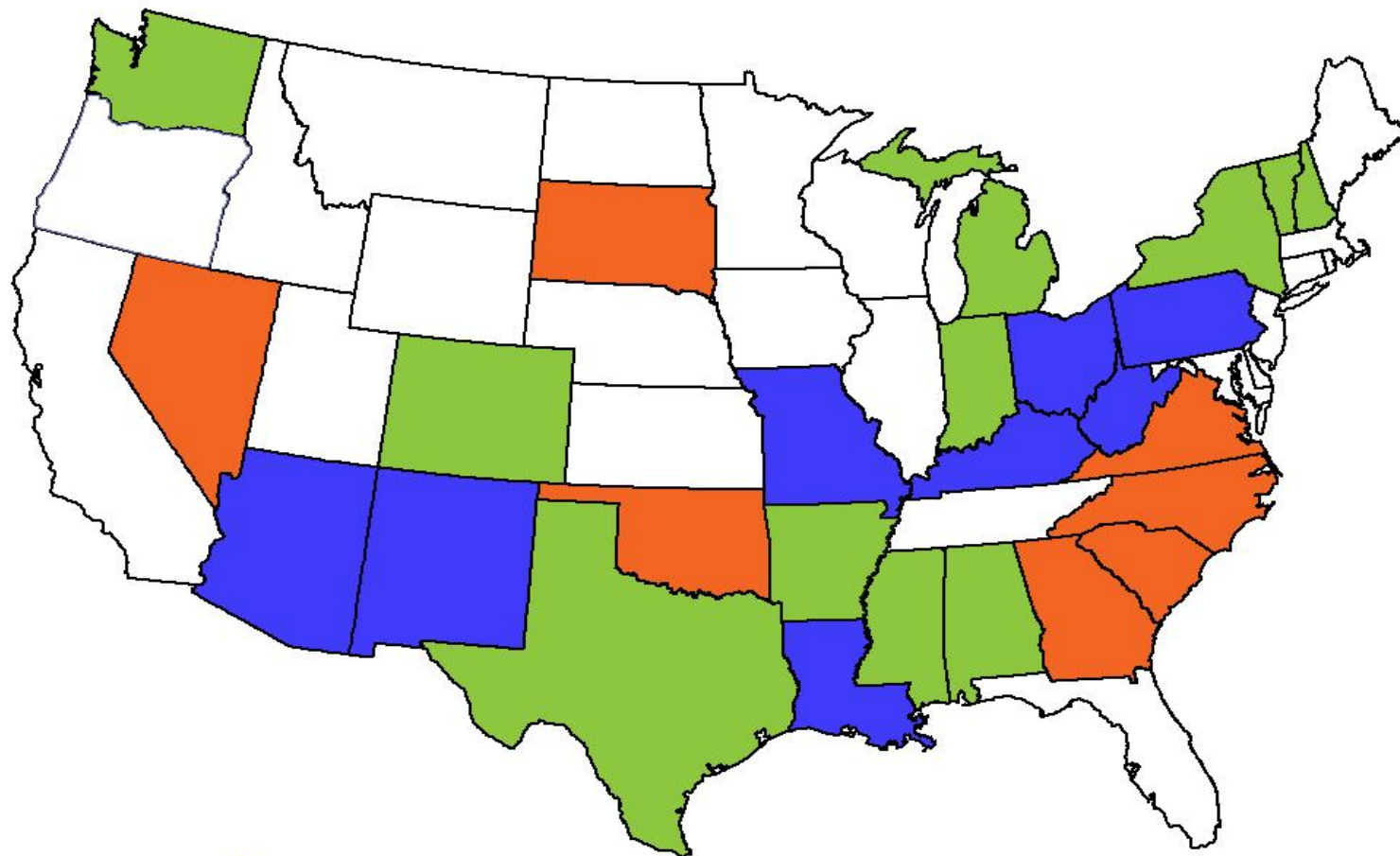
When Launched? Summer 2010



SET's Key Partners



States Currently Part of SET

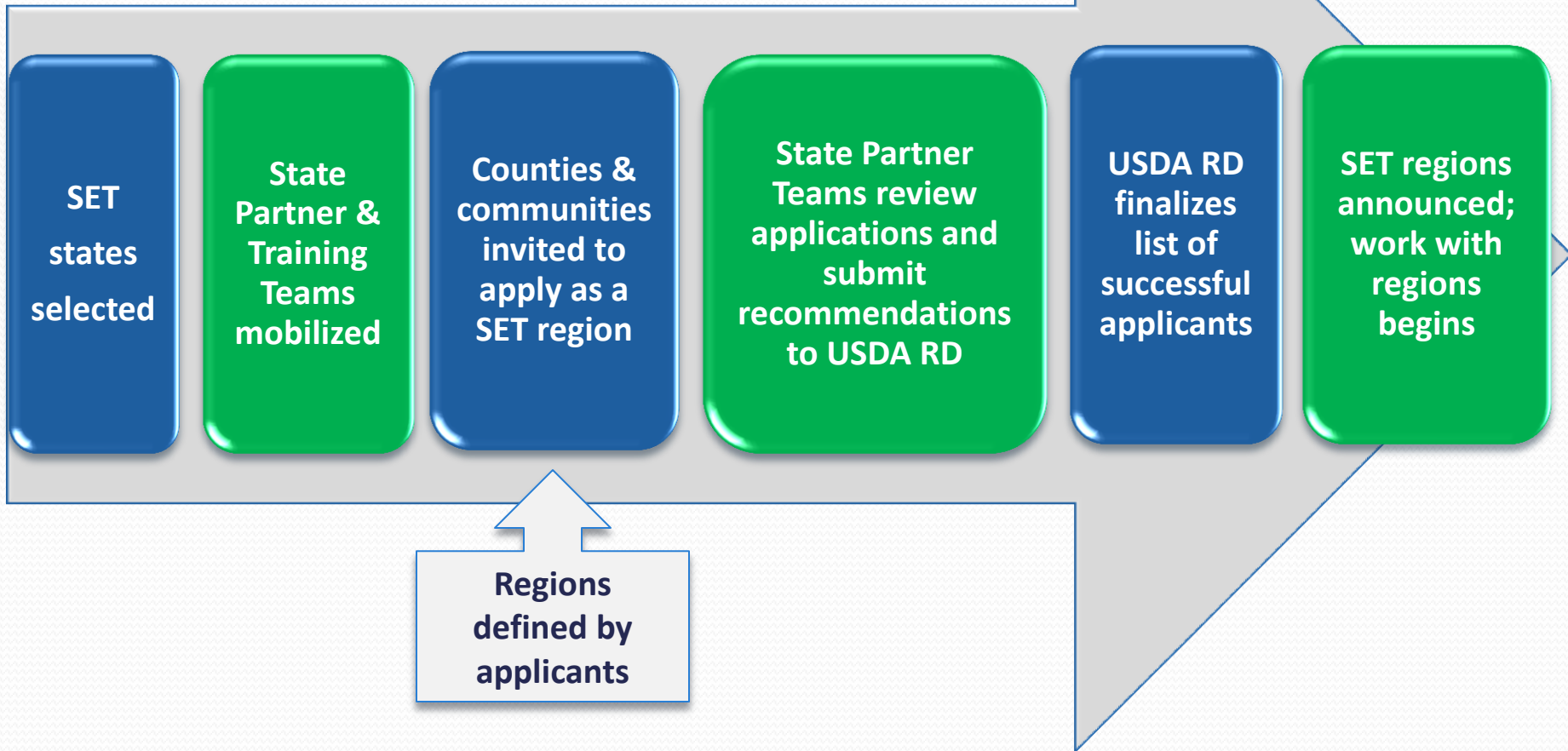


- SET Phase I
- SET Phase II
- SET Phase III

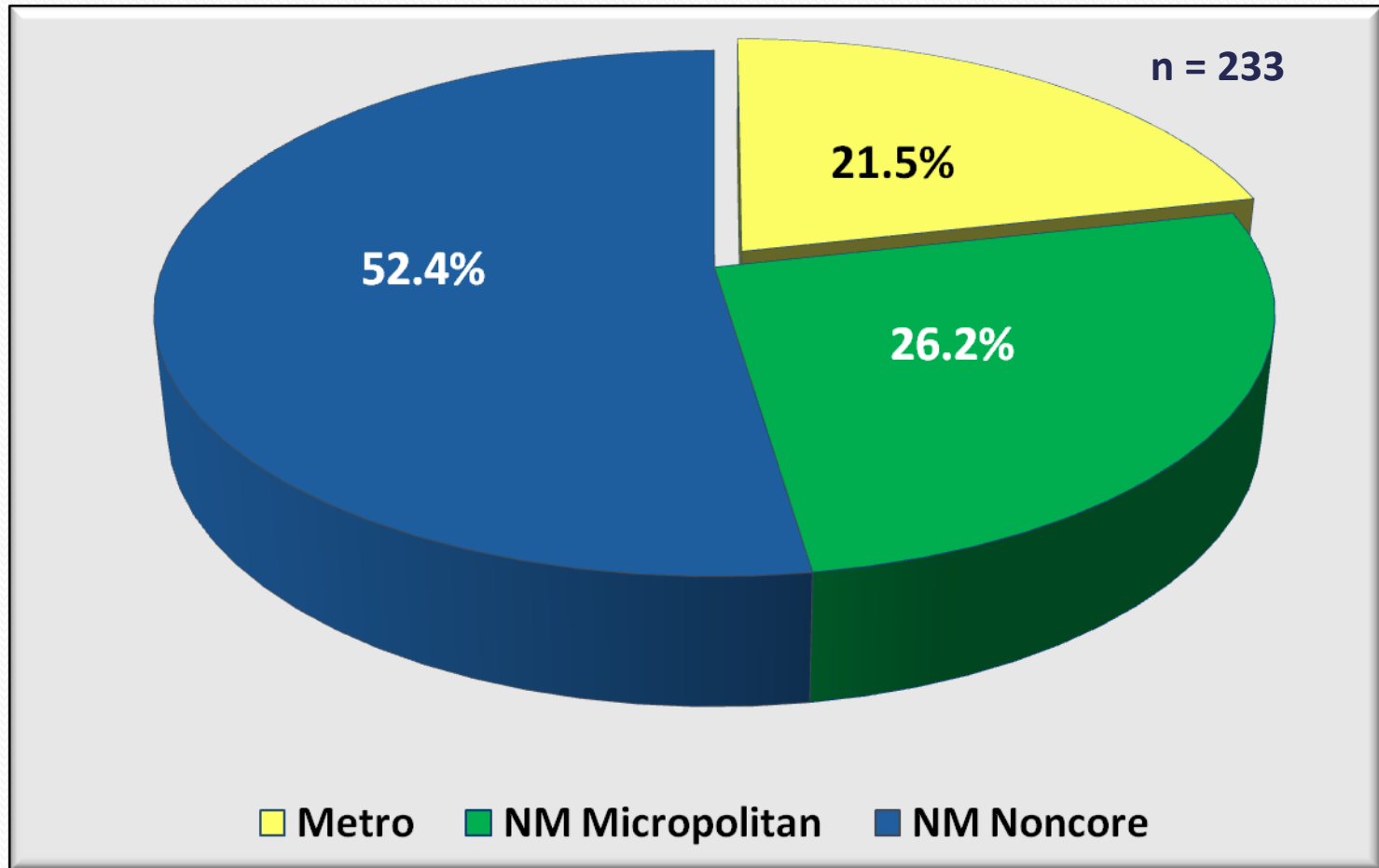


Southern Rural Development Center
<http://srdc.msstate.edu>
Created: 02/2012

SET Regions: A Bottom-Up Approach

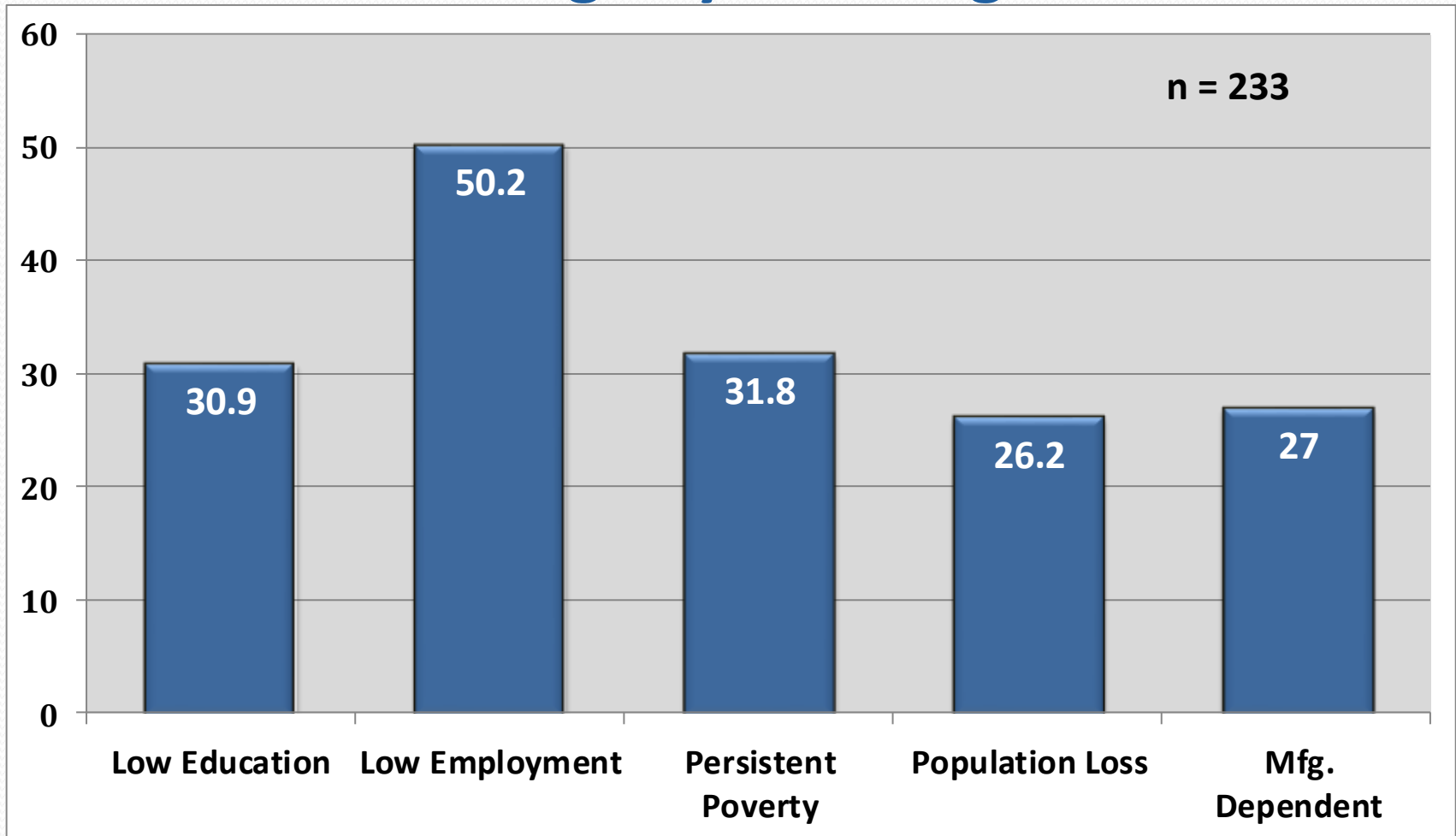


Reaching Rural Places: Current SET Counties



Counties Involved in SET: Facing Key Challenges

Percent



Note: Based on the ERS 2004 County Typology Codes

What SET Provides Regional Teams



Training

35-40 hours of on-site training

“Hands on” step-by-step process for building or enhancing regional plans



Data & Analysis

Detailed demographic & socio-economic information

Data and analysis on current and emerging clusters



Technical Assistance

Guidance in implementing the plan

Access to individuals with special expertise

More-in-depth cluster analysis



Peer-to-Peer Networking

Monthly calls with State Partner and/or Training Team Members

Webinars on key topics of relevance to multiple regions

The SET Training Modules

The Basics

Snapshot of SET

Regional
Development
101

Gearing Up

Building a Strong
Regional Team

Developing Your
Vision and Goals

Examining Resources

Current
Demographic
Features

Promoting a
Stronger Regional
Economy

Discovering
Assets and
Assessing
Barriers

Moving Into Action

Planning for
Success

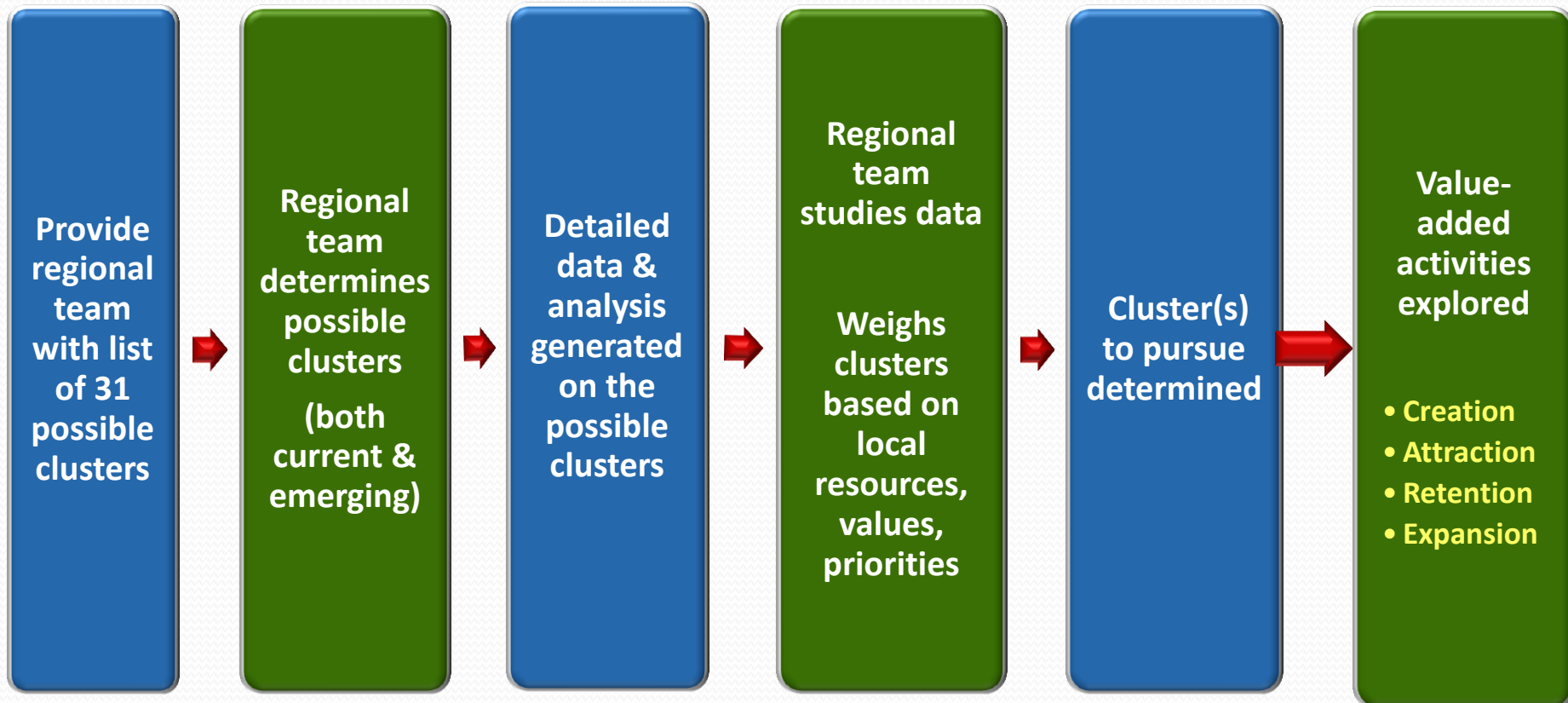
Measuring for
Success

Broad Regional Participation: A Central Tenet of SET *

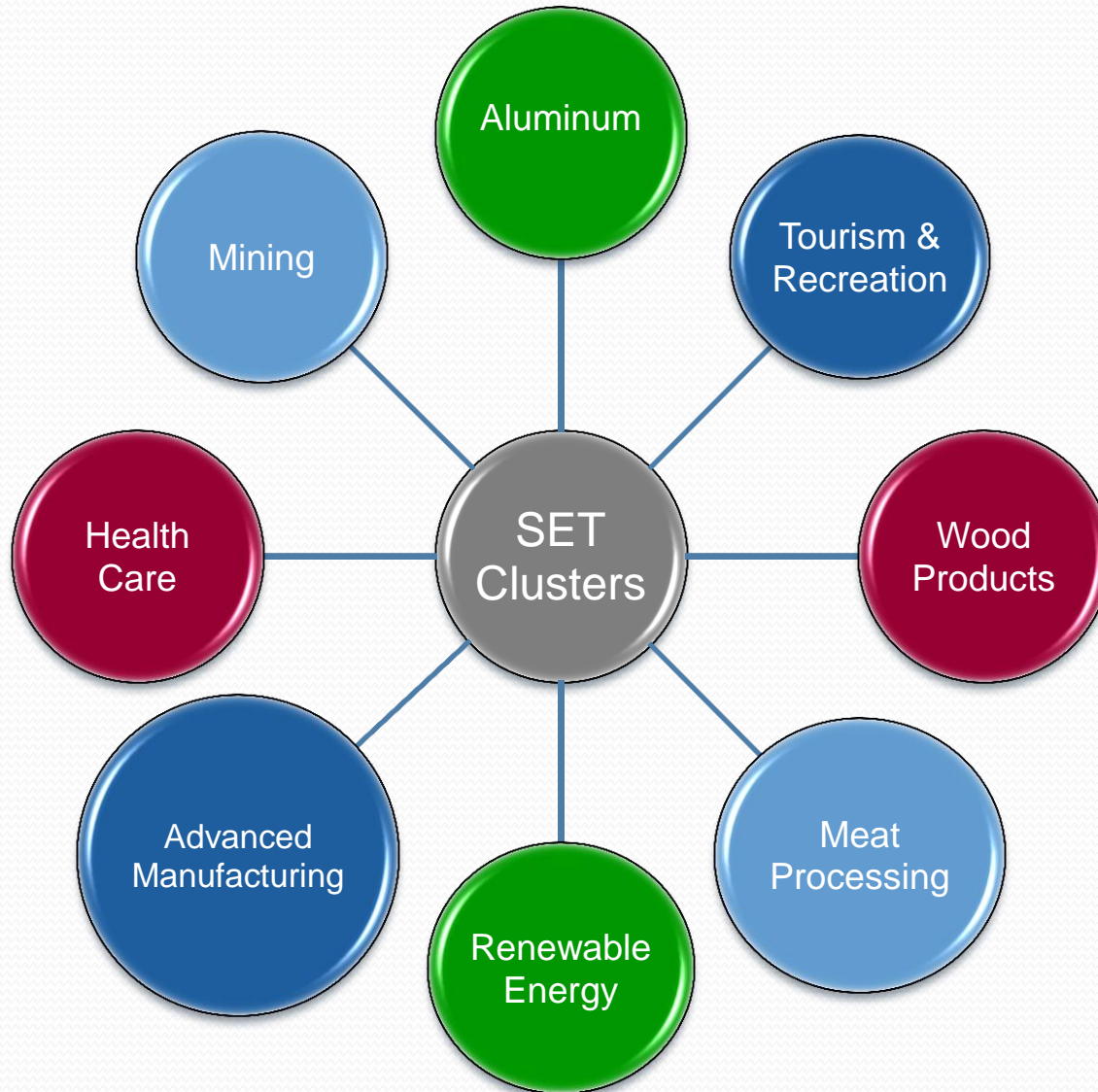
Sectors	Fall 2010	New Members Added	Total
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	
Business & Industry	9	67	76
Economic Dev. Orgs.	94	144	238
Education	29	105	134
Government	77	140	217
Health	1	8	9
Nonprofit Orgs.	8	17	25
Faith-based Orgs.	0	1	1
Local Citizens	0	19	19
TOTAL	218	501	719 (+230%)

* Based on the 22 regions involved in Phase I of SET

Selecting Clusters: *A Locally-Driven Process*



Examples of Clusters Chosen



Encouraging Signs:

SET is More Than Discovering Regional Strengths



SET is Helping to . . .

- Strengthen relationships across counties
- Promote broad-based engagement
- Build trust
- Guide sound investments
- Strengthen “social capital”
- Build capacity



As One Team Member Noted . . .

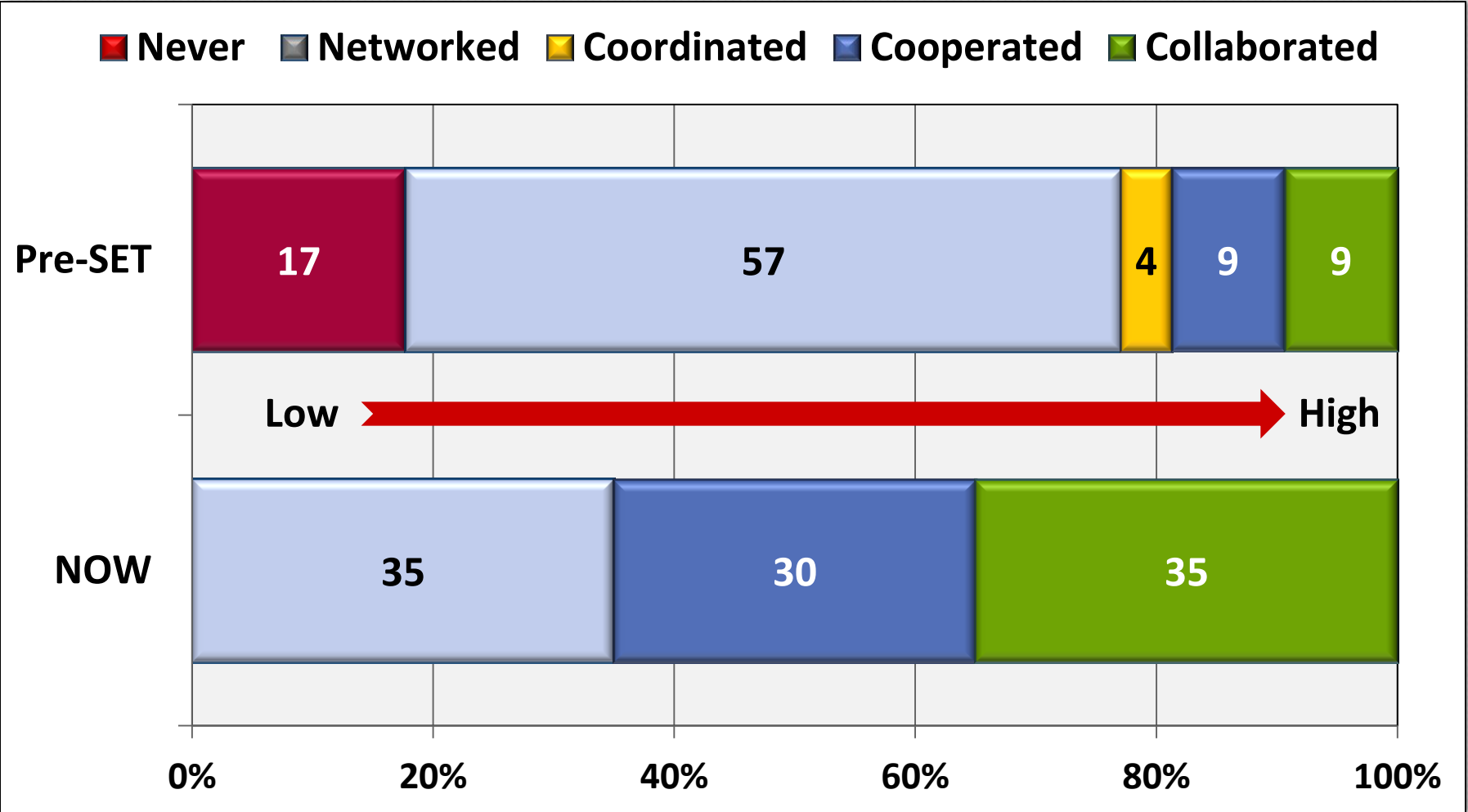


. . . the most remarkable thing about the regional partnership is that a group of individuals have, out of their own initiative and drive, created a vision -- and from that vision have developed a plan that will support economic development in this region for years and generations to come.

SET Regional Team Member

USDA RD & Extension:

Developing Stronger State & Local Partnerships





What's Ahead?

Expand & Strengthen SET

- Expand SET to 10-12 new regions in late 2012
- Continue external evaluation to determine needed modifications and refinements
- Produce new resources to support work of SET regional teams
- Build stronger ties with federal agencies that share a commitment to regional innovation -- such as EDA and the Partnership for Sustainable Communities

For More Information

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