CREATE BRIDGES Forum
Thank you!
Agenda

Welcome & Introductions

Background
- Regional
- Retail
- Process

Asset Mapping Presentation

Round Table Discussions
- Round 1: Strengths
- Round 2: Challenges
- Round 3: Opportunities

Next Steps & Concluding Remarks
Introductions
What is CREATE BRIDGES?

Stands for:

Celebrating Retail, Accommodations, Tourism, and Entertainment by Building Rural Innovations and Developing Growth Economies
Purpose of CREATE BRIDGES

1. Raise awareness

2. Determine challenges, barriers, and opportunities

3. Develop and implement strategies
CREATE BRIDGES Process

1. Form a regional steering committee
2. Conduct an asset map of CREATE businesses and existing training programs
3. Host a CREATE BRIDGES forum
4. Convene a retail academy
5. Workforce development
6. Business Retention and Expansion program
7. Employee engagement
8. New strategies and actions
Regional Approach

- Ideal number of participants
- Shared resources and partnerships
- Increased likelihood of economic development progress
Two-pronged Approach

Businesses

Workforce
Businesses

Conduct the Business Retention & Expansion program

Meet with business owners/managers

Understand business roles, needs, and changes

Assess challenges, barriers, and opportunities

Develop new strategies and actions to support local businesses
Workforce

- Streamline existing training opportunities
- Identify and fill gaps in existing training programs
- Initiate conversations with workforce personnel
- Assess feedback from workforce personnel
- Develop new strategies and actions to support the local workforce
Why do CREATE sector businesses matter?
Top 5 Industries by Employment in Rural America

73% of Rural Employment

- Educational Services, Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Manufacturing
- Retail Trade
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining
- Construction

US Census Bureau ACS 2011-2015
Retail & Tourism in Urban & Rural Places

Source: Rural Profile of Arkansas, 2019

Urban: 28% of employment*
Highlands: 26% of employment*

*Source: Rural Profile of Arkansas, 2019
Employment by Sector in Rural Regions of Arkansas, 2016

Source: Rural Profile of Arkansas, 2019

Source: JobsEQ 2017
Percent Change in Employment, 2010-2016

Source: Rural Profile of Arkansas, 2019
Employment Change by Sector in Rural Regions of Arkansas, 2010-2016

Source: Rural Profile of Arkansas, 2019
Asset Map of Ozark Foothills Counties
Activity

- Walk around the room
- Examine the different aspects of the asset map
- Add missing pieces as you go, using the materials provided
Turn Opportunity Into Reality

Opportunities + Assets in the Region → Goals to Pursue
Community Assets

Types of Assets

• Individual capacities – community members, Extension staff, faith leaders, community volunteers

• Formal and informal community associations – volunteer organizations, faith-based groups, training and workforce organizations

• Community institutions – universities, colleges, k-12 schools, not-for-profits, businesses, banks and lenders

• Physical assets – parks, infrastructure, transportation

• Community leaders and developers – current and potential local leaders and policy makers

How Relevant to:

• Businesses
• Employees
• Customers
Group Discussion
Round 1: Strengths

• Considering the assets you’ve just outlined, what do you think are the greatest strengths supporting CREATE businesses and their employees in the region?

• Put a ★ by the THREE things that your group sees as the most positive features (strengths) of your community.
Round 2: Challenges

• What do you think are the greatest challenges facing CREATE businesses and their workforce in the region?

• Put a ★ by the THREE things that your group sees as the biggest challenges.
Round 3: Opportunities

What *opportunities* might exist for leveraging our assets, enhancing our *strengths*, and/or addressing our *challenges*?
Round 3: Opportunities (cont.)

Given the opportunities,

• What *could* we do?
• Place a ☑️ beside these.

Given the opportunities we *could* do,

• What *should* we do?
• Place a ⭐️ beside these.
Opportunities Report Out
Next Steps

You are here

Form a regional steering committee
Conduct an asset map of CREATE businesses and existing training programs
Host a CREATE BRIDGES forum
Convene a retail academy

Workforce development
Business Retention and Expansion program
Employee engagement

New strategies and actions
Evaluation & Further Engagement
THANK YOU
Ozark Foothills Region Contacts

Graycen Bigger, Ozark Foothills Lead: 870-335-7409, director@innovatespringriver.org

Dr. Stacey McCullough, State Lead: 501-671-2078, smccullough@uaex.edu

Julianne Dunn, State Lead: 501-671-2158, jbdunn@uaex.edu

Ed Mabry: 501-541-0358, cmabry@uaex.edu

Link to Rural Profile of Arkansas: https://www.uaex.edu/RuralProfile
Ingredients for a Successful Forum

1. Share your honest views.
2. Listen carefully and respectfully to the views of others.
3. Only one person speaks at a time.
4. Speak from your own personal perspectives or experiences rather than on behalf of others.
5. Be sure everyone at the table shares talking time equally.
6. Turn off or silence your cell phones.