

## BLUE PAPERS

---

### **Rural Economic Development**

SMHA has observed that millions in rural economic development dollars designed to be spent for economically distressed communities in Louisiana have virtually no impact on those communities.

It is crucial that the local political process be opened up through partnerships with Community Based Organizations and non-profit Community Development Corporations.

Self-Development and least extractive strategies will encourage sustainable economic development.

#### **The Governor's Office should:**

1. Promote and insure grass roots access to comprehensive rural community economic development planning
2. Promote access to affordable capital in rural areas
3. Encourage the preservation of family farms especially for sustainable agriculture
4. Design and convene in partnership with business, universities and the not-for-profit sector, a rural policy institute especially for rural policy makers and administrators. Such an institute would emphasize obtaining sustainable economic development through partnerships, innovation and self-development in local communities and would highlight successful models.
5. Institutionalize in the higher educational system the sustainable development process.