

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND RETERRITORIALIZATION OF PLANNING DISTRICTS IN SOUTH DAKOTA AS A RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

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Abstract: Rural areas in South Dakota have been experiencing population decline over the last forty years. This has reduced tax revenues of small town and cities, in turn reducing the abilities of local governments to provide services. The concurrent rise in federal monies and federal policies has caused many local communities to reterritorialize into planning districts that are quasi-government in nature. These planning districts bring together the resources and talents of local communities to obtain much needed federal monies through grants. This is an examination of this process and its effects within South Dakota.

Key Words: *reterritorialization, planning districts, grants.*

Introduction

With a land area of 199,773 square kilometers, South Dakota is almost as large as Romania with its 238,391 square kilometers (Fig. 1). However, its population of 814,180 inhabitants (2010 census) is much smaller than that of Romania's 20,121,641 inhabitants (2011 census). With a small overall population, South Dakota's cities and towns likewise have small populations. For example, the largest city, Sioux Falls, has a population of only 153,888 inhabitants (2010). In addition and more importantly, most of South Dakota's populated areas are shrinking despite overall population growth for the state. For example, South Dakota's ten largest cities accounted for 34 percent of the state's total population in 1970 (South Dakota State Historical Society 2010, United States Census Bureau 2013). Their share increased to 44 percent by 2010 (Table 1). While the state's overall population increased 22 percent over this 40-year period, the largest city, Sioux Falls, increased 112 percent and the second largest city, Rapid City, grew 55 percent. It means that the robust growth rates of the largest cities came at the expense of the smaller towns. Indeed, 223 of South Dakota's 309 towns and cities, that is 72 percent, experienced population decline. More than 14 percent suffered a 50 percent or greater population decline (Fig. 2). Generally, the smaller the town, the greater the population decline. Of the small towns that grew, many were near the larger cities, meaning that they were effectively transformed into suburbs of the larger cities. The other small towns that grew were primarily along South Dakota's two major transportation corridors (Interstates 29 and 90).

Low numbers of inhabitants means smaller tax bases, which in turn result in fewer monies to provide services. The added difficulty of declining populations has meant that many of the already small budgets are shrinking. Population losses also have resulted in a phenomenon known as "rural brain drain," the loss of talented and skilled individuals to bigger cities (Carr and Kelafas 2010, Janezich 2011). This phenomenon has added to the challenges of providing services. In sum, the general problem that small towns confront in providing services is compounded in many cases by dramatic population decline. This has forced small communities

to develop new strategies, one of which is to pool resources. In other words, communities contribute portions of their budgets to a new and shared fund that is large enough to pay for new organizations and staff to provide services.



Fig. 1 - South Dakota: Counties, Ten Most Populous Cities, and Major Interstate Highways

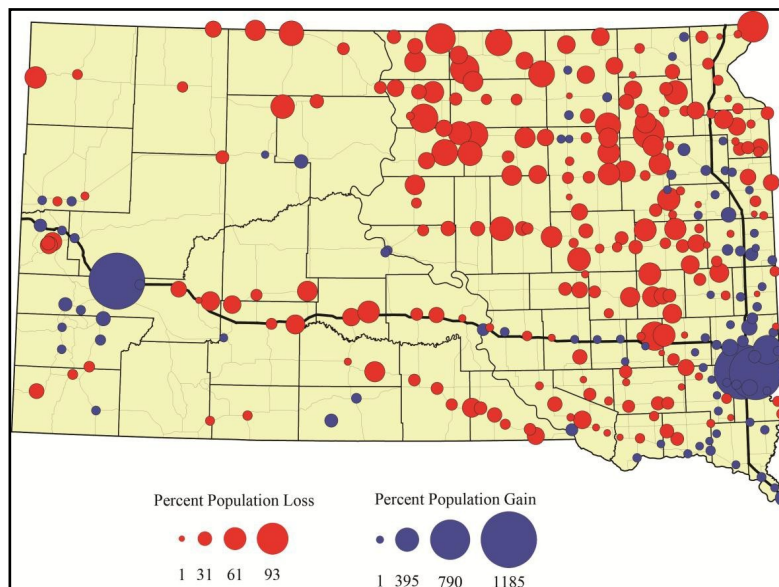


Fig. 2 - South Dakota: Population Change in Towns and Cities, 1970 to 2010

Table 1

Population Change of South Dakota's Ten Most Populous Cities

	1970	2010	% Change
South Dakota	665,507	814,180	22
Sioux Falls (city)	72,488	153,888	112
Rapid City (city)	43,836	67,956	55
Aberdeen (city)	26,476	26,091	-1
Brookings (city)	13,717	22,056	61
Watertown (city)	13,388	21,482	60
Mitchell (city)	13,425	15,254	14
Yankton (city)	11,919	14,454	21
Pierre* (city)	9,699	13,646	41
Huron (city)	14,299	12,592	-12
Vermillion (city)	9,128	10,571	16
Top Ten Total	228,375	357,990	57
% of Total	34%	44%	
*Capital			

Materials and Methods

These problems that South Dakota faces are not unusual. In fact, they are quite common for many states. A number of studies have examined the various aspects of rural development. In doing so, some have focused on new forms of rural governance (Clark et al. 2007, Connelly et al. 2006, Goodwin 1998, Little 2001, Marshall 2001, Wiskerke et al. 2003). Others have considered broader regional reterritorialization (Hamin and Marcucci 2008, Harrison 2006, Jonas and Pincetl 2006, Ward and Brown 2009). Some have considered both governance and reterritorialization practices through international comparisons (Derkzen 2010, Furmankiewicz et al. 2010, MacLeod 2001, Pezzini 2001). A few studies have examined developments in the American Midwest (Lu and Jacobs 2013, Norris-Baker 1999). However, the actual process of an evolving territorialization within South Dakota as a response to both the economic challenges resulting from rural decline and changing federal policies to deal with such challenges nationally has not been thoroughly examined. An analysis of this process and its effects in South Dakota is the focus of this study. For materials, this study draws on historical documents. The employed then reveals the facts that explain the creation and territorial evolution of the existing planning districts.

Results and Discussion

Currently, the pooling of local monies in South Dakota is manifested partly in six planning districts. Their territorial boundaries are comprised of counties (Fig. 3) though their constituents are towns and their projects likewise are oriented to towns. As seen in Table 2, the planning districts group the populations of the counties to make districts of larger populations with more resources. Information and data illustrating this process is drawn from the six planning districts as examples. A historical perspective helps to explain current structure and dynamics.

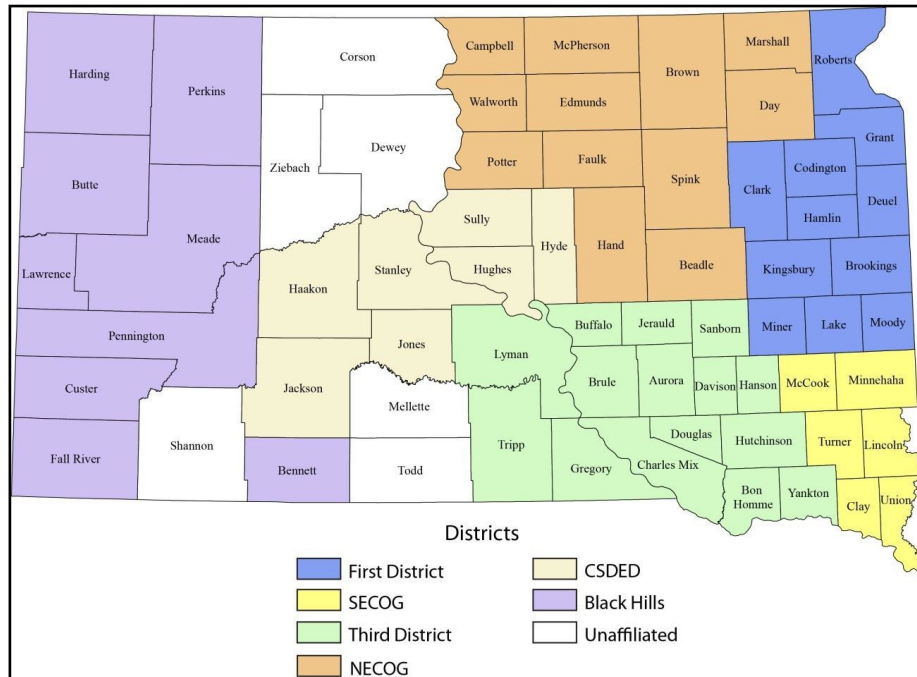


Fig. 3 - South Dakota: Current Territorialization of Planning and Development Districts

Table 2
South Dakota: Basic Characteristics of the Planning and Development Districts

Name	Number of Counties	Population	% of State Total Pop.	Land Area (km ²)	% of State Total Land Area
First District	11	115,878	14	20,772	10
District III	15	99,790	12	30,874	15
NECOG	12	92,268	11	35,329	18
SECOG	6	256,524	32	8,987	4
Black Hills Council	9	183,567	23	50,247	25
CSEED	7	28,755	4	23,144	12
Unaffiliated District	6	37,398	5	30,420	15
Total	66	814,180	100	199,773	100

The concern for urban and regional planning and community development was expressed by the federal government in Washington D.C. in the 1950s and 1960s through legislation that provided government grants but also increasingly required the participation of state and local governments. Three of the earliest and most notable legislative pieces were the Housing Act of 1954, the Housing Act of 1959, and the Interstate Highway and Defense Act of 1956 (Beville et

al. 1984: 1). By providing federal monies for specific projects, namely housing and transportation, these acts fostered the creation of regional planning by requiring communities to work together on large projects. More comprehensive regional planning was encouraged in 1966 when the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act was enacted and provided funds for more than 30 discrete federal grant and loan programs in multiple areas such as construction activities and open space land acquisition. As other government programs emerged, the number of federal programs providing funds for development projects increased dramatically (Doeksen et al. 1975: iii, State Planning Agency 1970: 3). One report noted that 81 programs with planning requirements were "administered by 40 different administrative program offices in 11 different departments, according to 59 separate sets of administrative regulations" (Muchmore and Fitzgerald 1973: 6). Furthermore, these offices were spread throughout the United States, requiring South Dakota's officials to travel long distances in a variety of directions. For example, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has offices in Chicago; the Department of Commerce had field offices in Minneapolis; field offices for the Department of the Interior were in Billings, Montana; the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's offices were in Kansas City (Muchmore and Fitzgerald 1973: 8).

In addition to the complexity of federal programs, existing laws, policies, and procedures discouraged local jurisdictions from working together. To remove many of the barriers, the federal government passed the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (ICA) of 1967 (Beville et al. 1984: 1, Office of Management and Budget 1969). This Act also helped local community leaders to manage federal grants and integrate them into state and local programs and policies. The ICA was implemented through A-95, a directive issued in 1969 by the Federal Bureau of the Budget (which later became the Office of Management and Budget) (Gordon 1974, Office of Management and Budget 1976). By regularizing procedures, A-95 provided the mechanisms for state and local governments to better work with one another. Most notably, it empowered state governors to create multi-county districts (Doeksen et al. 1975: 1-2). A-95 also created the Project Notification and Review System (PNRS), which required federal agencies to notify states of their programs' details. The PNRS also required applicants at the sub-state levels to obtain approval from their states' "clearing houses" before forwarding their applications to Washington D.C. (State Planning Agency 1970: 25). In short, ICA and A-95 facilitated cooperation through a framework and hierarchy of levels of state and local governments.

One other piece of federal legislation of this period greatly influenced the development of regional and community planning in South Dakota. This was the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966, more commonly known as Model Cities. It was a federal aid program that was part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. The intent of Model Cities was to alleviate poverty in cities through planning (Encyclopedia of Chicago 2005). Though not directly related to issues in South Dakota, it was a catalyst for a parallel proposal known as Model Rural Development, which was initially proposed by President Nixon when he attended a meeting in Fargo, North Dakota in 1970 (State Planning Agency 1970: 76). The intent of Model Rural Development was to improve the quality of life in rural area through the combined efforts and resources of state and federal governments. It came about through the Rural Development Act of 1972 (Nixon 1972).

The new legislation, acts, policies, and procedures not only encouraged the creation of multi-county planning organizations, they significantly reversed the way in which federal monies were dispersed. Previously, states and local communities only could react to federal projects

imagined and constructed in Washington D.C. The changes reversed significant aspects of the process: the obtainment of federal funds was contingent upon local input. This gave local communities a significant role in the development of regional planning projects (Binkley and Tabors 1980, Warren 1970, Williams 1983). It also led to the proliferation of regional development districts (Grossman 1973).

New federal monies created many new economic development opportunities for state and local communities, but the rules and regulations associated with these monies presented challenges that far exceeded the abilities of most communities. This problem was addressed as states grouped their communities into larger territorial entities to pool resources and talent to obtain federal monies, which was precisely the intent of federal legislation and policies. Governor Boe of South Dakota began this process when he laid the groundwork for the State Planning Agency in 1966: "for better coordination of all programs in State Government stemming from Federal sources and requiring planning as a prerequisite for receiving grants" (State Planning Agency 1970: 10-11). The State Legislature created and funded the Agency with House Bill 501 (State Planning Agency 1970: 10, 15). The Agency came under an Advisory Commission comprised of department heads and members of other commissions, totaling 24 individuals. As federal programs grew, Boe's successor, Governor Frank Farrar saw the need to reorganize the State Planning Agency in 1969, centralizing it into a more cohesive unit.

South Dakota responded to new federal programs with its own Model Rural Development Program in 1971 (Beville et al. 1984: 2, Doeksen et al. 1975: 44, Muchmore and Fitzgerald 1973: 5, South Dakota State Planning Agency 1971, 1973). This Program led to the development of Planning and Development Districts (P&DD). Using South Dakota's Codified Law (also known as Joint Powers Statutes), Governor Farrar issued an executive order on 4 December 1970 mandating the creation of six multi-county planning and development districts by 1 July 1971 (Beville et al. 1984: 2, Doeksen et al. 1975: 44, Planning and Development – District III. 2013a)¹). Four criteria were used to delineate the territories of the Planning Districts: 1) newspaper circulation; 2) minimum traffic volumes; 3) district trade areas; and 4) state economic areas (South Dakota State Planning Agency 1970: 61-74). The criteria yielded six Planning Districts, named "First" through "Sixth" respectively (Fig. 4).

The Districts were identified on a map, but they required local organization. This meant that they did not all come into being simultaneously. The state government gave priority to First District so that it could serve as a Model Rural Development District of the new Model Rural Development Program and thereby receive federal funding to pay for its professional staff (Beville et al. 1984: 2). Thus, First District became the pilot district. It was created in March 1971 by the State Planning bureau and called the First Planning and Development District (Doeksen et al. 1975: 44, First District Association of Local Governments 2013a). In July 1971, the boards of commissioners of 10 counties approved a Joint Cooperative Agreement that established the district's organization and designated Watertown as the headquarters (South Eastern Council Of Local Governments SECOG 2010). With the establishment and successful operation of First District, Governor Richard Kneip brought into operation the other planning districts at six-month intervals (Muchmore and Fitzgerald 1973: 15). The following is a list of the other five districts, their intended origination dates, and their adopted new names:

1) South Dakota's use of the word "District" is "synonymous with 'Region' and means a "Multi-Jurisdictional Area" (South Dakota State Planning Agency 1970: 59).

Second District (July 1972): South Eastern Council of (Local) Governments (SECOG)² (2013c).

Third District (1973): Planning and Development – District III (2013d).

Fourth District (January 1973): Northeast Council of (Local) Governments (NECOG) (2013e).

Fifth District (1974): Fifth District Planning and Development Committee.

Sixth District (January 1972): Black Hills Council of Local Governments (2013a).

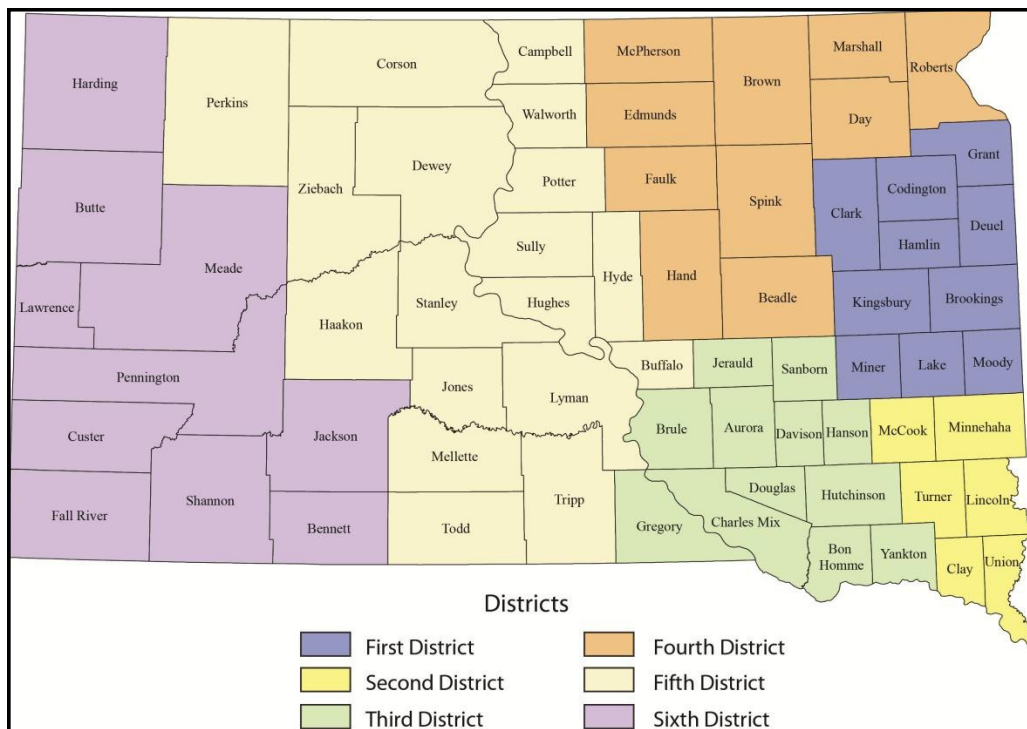


Fig. 4 - South Dakota: Original Territorialization of Planning and Development Districts.

These Planning Districts made it possible to receive federal funds such as “701-Comprehensive Planning Assistance” grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (2013, Doeksen et al. 1975: 45, Muchmore and Fitzgerald 1973: 15-16). However, other federal agencies also required the existence of multi-county jurisdictional units before they would be awarded federal monies (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 1973: 185, 221-252). Thus, South Dakota’s six Planning Districts were structured in a way that also satisfied the requirements of other federal agencies. An example includes the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA). For example,

2) SECOG also developed from an earlier incarnation. In 1968, six townships in Minnehaha County surrounding Sioux Falls and two northern townships in Lincoln County formed the Greater Sioux Falls Regional Planning Commission. Eventually, the remaining townships in Minnehaha and Lincoln counties were included and in 1970, the Sioux Empire Council of Governments (SECOG) was created (http://www.secog.org/secog_information/history.htm, Accessed 26 August 2013).

First District also became an Economic Development Districts (EDD) in May 1973 (Doeksen et al. 1975: 44). Since then, all the other Planning Districts have become EDDs (U.S. Economic Development Administration EDA 2013). Three of the Districts are also Councils of Governments: Northeast Council of Local Governments (NECOG), Planning and Development – District III, and South Eastern Council of Local Governments (SECOG) (National Association of Regional Councils 2013, Wikstrom 1977: 16-18). South Dakota's two largest cities created Sioux Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization and Rapid City Area Metropolitan Planning Organization respectively.

While still in their infancy, the potential importance of South Dakota's Planning Districts was soon established following the Rapid City flood disaster that occurred on 9 June 1972 within four counties of District VI. At the time, District VI was only a few months old with only a few staff members and very little funding (Muchmore and Fitzgerald 1973: 16-17). Immediate concern was for rescue, food, shelter, and debris removal. Nevertheless, the concern grew for a long-range strategy for reconstruction. This concern was fueled by state officials in California and West Virginia, two states that recently experienced natural disasters. These states benefited from emergency response but they continued to suffer problems, which they attributed to a lack of long-term planning. Recognizing the need to address long-term problems, the Office of the President of the United States issued an "Order to the Mountain Plains Federal Regional Council and to the Office of Emergency Preparedness" to directly work with regional planning agencies and provide grants-in-aid to invest in urban renewal, water and sewer restoration, and other projects to restore a substantial portion of the \$150 million property loss and damaged suffered in District VI's four counties (Muchmore and Fitzgerald 1973: 16-17). All this required a monumental planning effort and was funded primarily by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA). The rapid infusion of large sums of federal monies quickly and fully converted District VI from a skeletal framework with few staff members and no established track record of completed and successful projects to a fully operational and robust planning district. District VI soon became a model for disaster response as state and local official from several eastern states visited and examined its operations after Hurricane Agnes hit the eastern seaboard in the latter part of June 1972. Federal representatives went to the Hurricane Agnes disaster area to explain how a coordinated effort of local, state, and federal agencies was implemented through District VI to respond to the Rapid City flood.

South Dakota's six Planning Districts have multiple identities that make them appear to be exceedingly complex. This results from the fact that there are numerous federal agencies providing grants with each having its own requirements concerning the structures of the receiving planning agencies. Rather than having numerous planning agencies, South Dakota's planning districts are designed with the flexibility to meet the requirements of the various federal agencies. Thus, despite their apparent complexity, their designs actually are streamlined and efficient because they are the minimization of the creation of multiple organizations with overlapping interests and responsibilities. Indeed, many of them have the same planning staffs though they have governing bodies at assume differing configurations for each function they serve. In other words, the Districts' multiple identities allow them to pool resources rather than stretch them as the Districts help to draw in federal monies to local governments while working with state agencies, other governmental agencies, and private industry. Figure 5 below indicates the central role that the Planning Districts play in obtaining funds and coordinating projects.

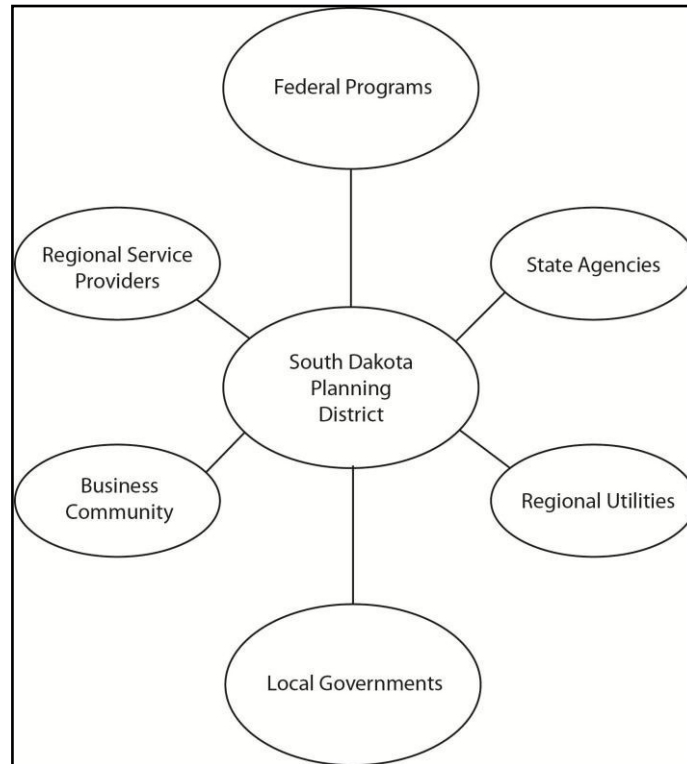


Fig. 5 - South Dakota: Original Territorialization of Planning and Development Districts
(Adopted from Figure I-4, *Central South Dakota Enhancement District*. 2013b)

The important fact to note about all these multi-county districts is that they are quasi-governmental in nature and purely voluntary. They have no legal, regulatory, or taxing authorities and cannot require local governments to implement or comply with policies (First District Association of Local Governments 2013b, Muchmore and Fitzgerald 1973: 16-17). Membership in them is purely voluntary with the districts' finances funded in large part through combinations of grants, dues, and services fees. Dues are determined by the population sizes of communities. In many of South Dakota's Planning Districts, some communities simply choose not to participate. It also has meant that some counties have opted to change membership. A comparison of the maps in Figures 3 and 4 illustrates these changes. For example, Roberts County in the far northeastern part of the state switched from NCOG to First District. Most notably, Fifth District was disbanded in 1983 (Central South Dakota Enhancement District 2013b: 2). Subsequently, many of its former member counties joined neighboring Districts. Perkins and Bennett became part of Black Hills Council. Campbell, Walworth, and Potter joined NCOG (Northeast Council of Local Governments (NCOG) 2013c). Buffalo, Lyman, and Trip became part of District III. Corson, Ziebach, Dewey, Mellette, and Todd are no longer members of any District. In 1999, the remaining counties of the former Fifth District began to organize a new District, which eventually became the Central South Dakota Enhancement District (CSDED) that exists today (Central South Dakota Enhancement District 2013a). In May 2000, a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was

written (Knutson et al. 2012) and in December 2006, CSED became an Economic Development District (EDA) like the five other

Planning Districts³⁾

Each Planning District has its own governing structure. For example, First District is overseen by a board known as the “Governing Body,” which has one county commissioner, one elected municipal representative, and one at-large member from each of the 11 member counties (First District Association of Local Governments 2013a). The chairman of the Santee Sioux Tribe and the chairman Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe are also members of the Governing Body. Similarly, the Central South Dakota Enhancement District (CSDDED) has a “Board of Directors” that serves as the District’s governing body. However, in addition to having members from the seven counties of the District, CSDDED’s Board also has non-governmental members comprised of “Private Sector Representatives” and “Stakeholders” (Central South Dakota Enhancement District 2013b: 2-6). The Private Sector Representatives are from major businesses within the District. The Stakeholders are Ft. Pierre Chamber of Commerce and the Capitol University Center. The Board also has an “At-Large Representative,” which is currently filled by a person from the “Disabled/Religion” category. With a total of 33 board members, governmental representatives comprise 60.6 percent of CSED’s governing body, non-governmental representatives hold 36.4 percent of the seats, and the at-large representative position accounts for three percent of the board.

As noted previously, CSDDED is also an Economic Development District (EDD). To directly address its role as an EDD, CSDDED has an extended governing structure known as the CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) Committee (Central South Dakota Enhancement District 2013b: 3-6). The CEDS Committee is comprised of 18 members from the “Private Sector” (54.5 percent) and 15 members from “Representatives of Other Economic Interests” (45.5 percent). Currently, of the 18 Private Sector representatives, 10 of them are Private Sector Representatives of the CSDDED’s Board of Directors. Of the 15 members from the Representatives of Other Economic Interests, two are from CSDDED’s Board of Directors. Though the CSDDED Board of Directors and the CEDS Committee share many members, the CEDS Committee is comprised of more private, economic interests than CSDDED’s Board of Directors.

District III is structured similarly in that the governing committee is comprised of 51 percent elected officials and the remainder is private interests. Its CEDS Committee is primarily private sector interests (Planning and Development – District III 2013b). The Northeast Council of Local Governments (NECOG) likewise has a similar structure for its governing body (Northeast Council of Local Governments (NECOG) 2013a: 1). The South Eastern Council of Local Governments (SECOG) also has a comparable design (South Eastern Council of Local Governments (SECOG) 2013a). However, it contains South Dakota’s largest city, Sioux Falls, which is very metropolitan in character and function. It means that SECOG has both a rural and urban component to it. To deal with the differing issues, SECOG created two commissions: the Rural Commission and the Urbanized Commission (South Eastern Council of Local Governments SECOG 2013b). The latter is now known as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation planning.

The main function of the Planning Districts is to provide technical and professional assistance

3) Because Jackson County did not become a member of the CSDDED until 2006, it was not officially included in the EDA designation until 2008.

to ultimately obtain monies from federal granting agencies. This is often accomplished through the preparation of grant applications. Early examples include transportation and housing which began with grant programs of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (2013) and the United States Department of Transportation (2013) in the 1950s and 1960s. Over time, the services expanded to include such areas as county and city comprehensive plans, capital improvements programming, tax increment district plans, survey development and administration, comprehensive land use plans, zoning and subdivision regulations, transportation plans, emergency planning and management, disaster and hazard mitigation, USDA Rural Development, solid waste management, land-water conservation, rural water systems, natural resource plans, and recreation plans (Fig. 5) (Black Hills Council of Local Governments 2013b, First District Association of Local Governments 2013d, 2013f, Northeast Council of Local Governments 2013b, Planning and Development – District III 2013e).



Fig. 5 - Brookings, South Dakota: Innovation Campus

This research park is located next to South Dakota State University. It combines scholarly knowledge from the university with investments from private industry. First District provided assistance to stakeholders in Brookings to obtain grants to build the infrastructure for the park

(Source: First District Association of Local Governments 2013g)

To provide these services, most of the planning districts have developed robust geographic information systems (GIS) services, which include GPS data collection, aerial photography, and mapping plans (Black Hills Council of Local Governments 2013b, Central South Dakota

Enhancement District 2013c, First District Association of Local Governments 2013c, Northeast Council of Local Governments 2013d, Planning and Development – District III 2013c).

The expanded scope of activities indicates that the planning districts are providing needed services. At the same, the planning districts have been highly successful in obtaining federal and state grants for their communities. For example, First District was able to obtain \$7,227,417 in grants for Brookings County during the most recent five-year period, namely fiscal years 2008-2012. Considering that Brookings County and its communities paid \$214,350 in membership dues, the investment return was \$33.72 for every dollar that it paid in dues (First District Association of Local Governments 2013e). This also indicates that the planning districts are self-sustaining.

Conclusion

Administratively, the United States of America is divided into 50 states that are further subdivided into 3,144 counties and county-equivalents. There are also more than 30,000 municipalities. This territorial governing structure is generally effective in providing services to citizens. The large number of counties and county-equivalents and municipalities means that they are small in size and responsive to local needs. However, the advantages of numerous, small entities presents certain disadvantages, namely equally small financial resources and talent pools that address issues at particular scales. In some cases, states are too large and counties and municipalities are too small to effectively address certain issues. An intermediate territorial structure would best attend to these issues. The disadvantage of creating such a territorial structure would be another layer of government, specifically the large costs of another layer of bureaucracy plus all the complications an additional layer of bureaucracy would add to the administrative hierarchy and its functioning. In short, another layer of bureaucracy would cost not only large sums of money but also time. These costs can be avoided, or at least greatly minimized, by the alternative of multi-county districts that draw on county and municipal resources with the addition of minimal staff to coordinate and maximize the combined resources. Multi-county districts have been developed throughout the United States with the process and structure in South Dakota illustrated here. Like elsewhere, South Dakota's planning districts have been challenged by sparse funds and lack of interest by stakeholders, many of whom may be suspicious of any expansion of government including quasi-governmental structures like planning districts. The situation makes it difficult for the staffs of planning districts to prove their value when they have few funds to provide the services that would show their value. For example, Fifth District disbanded in 1983 and an effort to re-launch it did not begin until 1999. On the other hand, the Rapid City Flood of 1972 illustrated the value of Sixth District and helped it through a precarious beginning. Natural disasters aside, First District and the other districts were able to carefully invest their resources to leverage more resources to illustrate their value. Nevertheless, funding the districts has been a perpetual need, but the planning districts have so far continued finding funds and perpetuate their operations.

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