**CED1: Rural Community & Economic Development Advisor**

**DESCRIPTION**

The general disciplinary focus of this position is rural community and economic development. The preferred educational and professional background requirements include a minimum of a master’s degree in community development, business management, agricultural economics/ development, or related fields. Experience in rural communities, agriculture tourism, food production, or natural resource industries is highly desirable.

The position will report to the Del Norte County Director and with many supporting units including ANR statewide programs such as the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, the California Communities and Sustainable Food Systems, the Diversified Farming and Food Systems, and Forest and Rangeland Program Team, as well as the Agritourism Workgroup.

**JUSTIFICATION**

Over the last two decades, a paradigm shift has been occurring in rural economic development efforts. Community leaders have sought new tools and ideas to better support and leverage each region’s social, economic, and natural resource capital. Efforts to support new and existing businesses in improving vertical integration, value-added manufacturing, shared marketing, access to capital, improved infrastructure/transportation, and other measures to bolster and improve efficiency have been shown to have the most significant payoff. UC ANR is well-positioned to improve their economic development capacities by bringing new academics to match existing teams in agriculture and natural resources to better ensure lasting community outcomes, which support agricultural and natural resource-based resilience, community health, and diversity of jobs which increase prosperity and security of rural communities.

The North Coast Rural Community Economic Development Area Advisor will focus on providing technical assistance for agriculture and natural resource businesses. The Advisor will support the interests of county, city, and tribal governments by aiding their economic development goals and programs, and other interested parties by enhancing both short- and long-term community partnerships in the face of global competition, changing climate, and continued pressure on natural resources.

The Advisor will serve as the regional lead for community prosperity in the three-county area. High-priority subject areas include natural resource economic development and resiliency. The advisor will be expected to work in partnership with county, city, and tribal governments; NGOs; foundations; and UC investigators to 1) provide leadership to develop innovative models for rural economic prosperity and resiliency, 2) provide technical assistance for communities to help navigate regional management and regulatory hurdles, and 3) create synergistic, collaborative relationships with local and non-governmental partners. This position will contribute to UC ANR’s goals of 1) promoting economic prosperity in California through enhanced community economic development, 2) conserving California’s natural resources through stewardship and support of working lands, and 3) building climate-resilient communities and ecosystems.

**EXTENSION**

The position will be expected to work in partnership with local government agencies involved in business incubation and community and economic development by taking an active role in public outreach and development of collaborative efforts to strengthen key government and other non-governmental organizations. The advisor will collaborate with UCCE Advisors and Specialists, as well as other UC and CSU system academics.

**RESEARCH**

The candidate would address key questions such as the following: 1) How do innovative business incubation models create jobs and increase community resiliency? 2) What kinds of public and private investments best sustain rural communities? 3) What type of investments lead to value-added processing capacity, vertical integration, and durable marketing strategies? The candidate will need skills and competencies to cross disparate research fields to address issues that will ensure the long-term prosperity and resiliency of rural communities.

**ANR NETWORK**

UC SAREP, California Communities and Sustainable Food Systems, Forest and Rangeland Program Team, Sustainable Food Systems Strategic Initiative, the Community Development and Policy Specialist(s) at UC Davis.

**EXTERNAL NETWORK**

Tri-Agency Economic Development Authority, Council of Economic Advisors, USDA Rural Development, Humboldt Area Foundation, California Center for Rural Policy, and local tribes

**SUPPORT**

Del Norte and Humboldt County can provide office space, travel, communication (telephone, internet), clerical support, and office supplies.

**OTHER SUPPORT**

Grants funds from CA Department of Food and Agriculture Specialty Crops program, USDA Rural Development, Organic Research Foundation, EDA, and others are likely.

**HEADQUARTERS AND COVERAGE AREA**

Del Norte will serve as the headquarters county and will provide regional and cross-county coverage to Humboldt and Trinity Counties.

**DEVELOPED AND PROPOSED BY**

Gail Feenstra and Rachael Callahan (SAREP), Glenda Humiston (UCANR Vice President), Yana Valachovic (Del Norte/Humboldt County Director), Kathy Moxon (Redwood Coast Rural Action), Connie Stewart (CA Rural Policy), Chris Howard (Del Norte County Supervisor)