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| http://srdc.msstate.edu/set/sites/default/files/curriculum/phase-v/logos/set_logo_final.jpghttp://srdc.msstate.edu/set/sites/default/files/set_stories/download.jpgSeptember 2016 |  | |  | | --- | | SET  IN NC | | April 2017 |   $7 MILLION IN ADDITIONAL FUNDING LEVERAGED |
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| Impacts of the Stronger Economies Together Initiative in north carolina For more information, contact Becky Bowen, J.D., *Program Manager, Cultivate NC, NC Cooperative Extension Service, NC State University,* [blbowen@ncsu.edu](mailto:blbowen@ncsu.edu), 919-628-4317 |  | C:\Users\Becky\Pictures\NC State Extension logo.jpgC:\Users\Becky\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Word\CultivateNCLogo_RGB.JPG |

Launched in 2010 by USDA Rural Development and the nation’s four Regional Rural Development Centers and their land-grant university partners, the Stronger Economies Together (SET) initiative is now in place in 94 regions in 32 states.

SET benefits include:

* Step-by-step coaching to guide the design and implementation of a practical and viable regional economic development plan.
* In-depth data tailored to the region, describing its current and emerging clusters, comparative economic advantages, and detailed demographic and socio-economic information.
* Tools to uncover local assets and resources that can advance the region’s economic strategies technical assistance from Extension educators, USDA RD state staff, the Regional Rural Development Centers, and the Purdue Center for Regional Development to guide the initial stages of implementation of regional goals and strategies.

NC Cooperative Extension at NC State University has facilitated the SET planning process in 4 regions in North Carolina. The Sandhills Region (Lee, Moore, and Richmond Counties) and the Eastern Triangle (Wilson, Pitt, and Greene Counties) participated in the SET III process in 2012-2013. Since that time over $750,000 has been leveraged to strengthen the agricultural sector in the Sandhills, including the development of a food hub to aggregate produce from small farms across the region. In the Eastern Triangle a Food Commercialization Center is under development – a direct impact of their SET plan goal of increasing food and beverage manufacturing.

The NC Foothills Region (Polk, Rutherford, McDowell, and Cleveland Counties) and the Kerr-Tar Region (Person, Granville, Vance, Warren, and Franklin Counties) are SET V regions. They each recently completed their facilitated sessions and are putting the final touches on their plans now. Both regions have strategies targeting workforce development, business retention and expansion, quality of life, and natural resource development.

Visit http://srdc.msstate.edu/set/apply

for more information on the SET application process. To view success stories, visit http://srdc.msstate.edu/set/current-regions/success-stories.

*“Goal subject matter focus groups are one example of a new way to work together. Workforce development committees focused on different industry needs have also popped up. There is a new push towards STEM education, e.g., how do we get vo-tech into middle school. There is a discussion among the chambers with the NC Rural Center for a regional leadership program. There is a greater willingness to cooperate and build leadership development programming. There is great effort to get everybody around the table and talking, particularly about the subject matter of the plan goals.“*

* *NC SET Participant*