Living in the Middle of Everywhere

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THE NARRATIVE



- There's a brain drain
- We live in the middle of nowhere
- We are a sleepy town
- Everyone knows one another
- Nobody lock their doors
- The lucky few escape





CHARLES GALPIN RURAL LIFE



Parting of the Ways, Wyoming

Galpin, Charles Josiah. 1918. Rural Life. The Century Co: New York



Local Newspaper

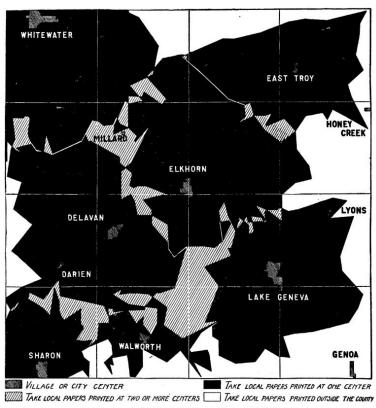


Fig. 4. LOCAL-PAPER COMMUNITIES

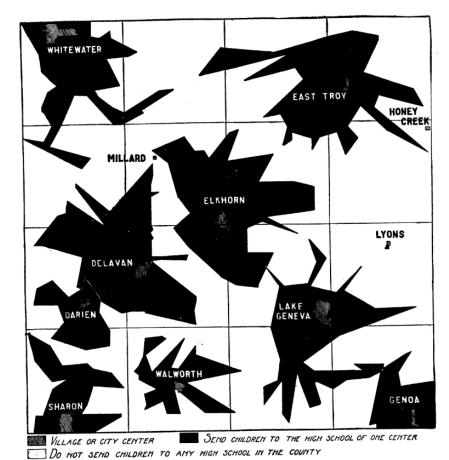


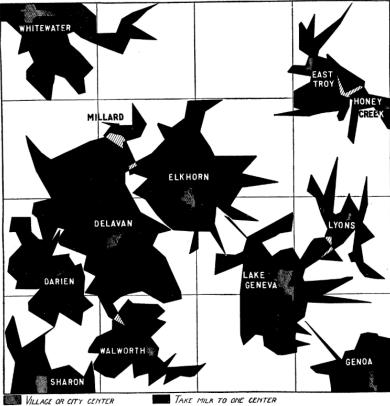
Fig. 7. HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITIES IN WALWORTH COUNTY, WISCONSIN

High School





Milk Market



TAKE MILK TO COUNTRY CREAMERIES OR SEND IT OUTSIDE OF COUNTY

TAKE MILK TO TWO CENTERS





University of Minnesota

EXTENSION

Nebraska Buffalo Commons Research 2012

Workforce Movers
University of Minnesota,
2004, 2012, 2020



EXTENSION





Montana Movers Study, 2021





Newcomers: Why?

Simpler pace of life



Safety and Security



Low Housing Cost







Newcomers: Who?

- 41% moved primarily for a job (50% youngest/ 35% oldest)
- 25% lived there previously
- 91% have some college or bachelor's
- 75% household incomes over \$50k
- 47% have children in household
- 21% telecommute!

Source: 2020 University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality. Rural workforce movers study. Funded by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.





Living in the Middle of Everywhere

"We ended up landing in Roscoe, Illinois because of the location. It's a quick drive to Chicago (90 minutes), Milwaukee (60 minutes), & Madison (45 minutes)"

http://sprudge.com/snowdrift-coffee-129804.html



CHOOSING HOME

Newcomers look at 3-5 communities

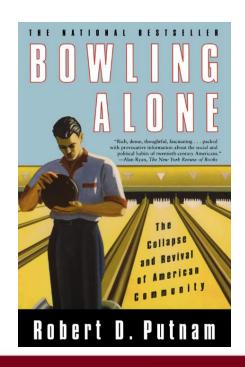
- Chicken and egg of job/people primacy
- Topical reasoning (local foods regions)
- Assets vary by demographic
- Hedging household economic bets

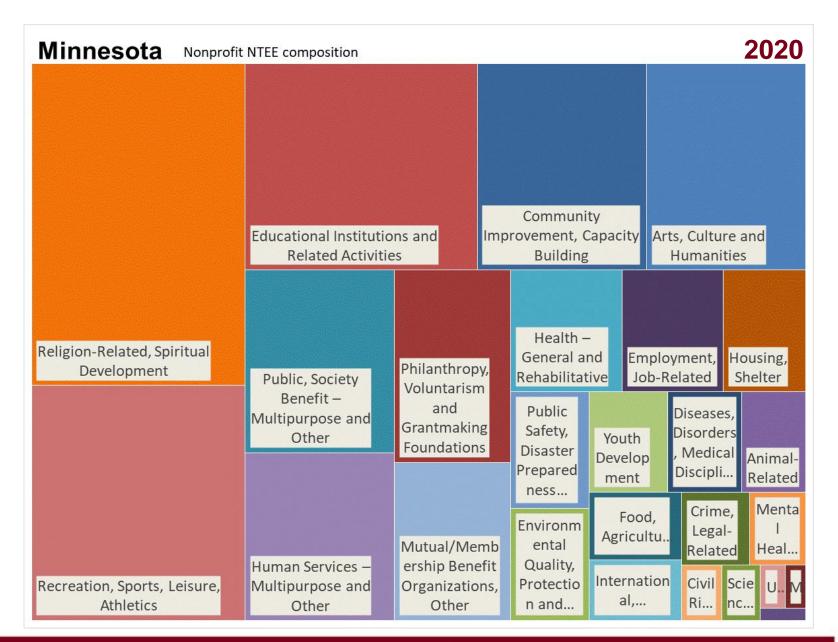




Middle of Everywhere

Social Life

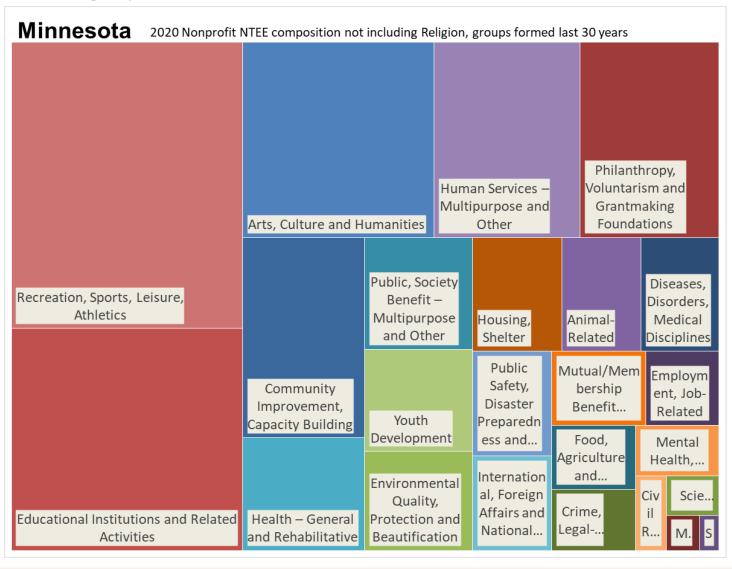








17,753 of the 31,603 (56%) nonprofits were formed in the past 30 years Legacy Amendment is visible



The Legacy Amendment increases the state sales tax by three-eighths of one percent beginning on July 1, 2009 and continuing until 2034. The additional sales tax revenue is distributed into four funds as follows: 33 percent to the clean water fund; 33 percent to the outdoor heritage fund; 19.75 percent to the arts and cultural heritage fund; and 14.25 percent to the parks and trails fund.



SHIFT in Engagement



Narrow geography **Broad focus**

Action: consensus

Broad geography Narrow focus

Action: the small



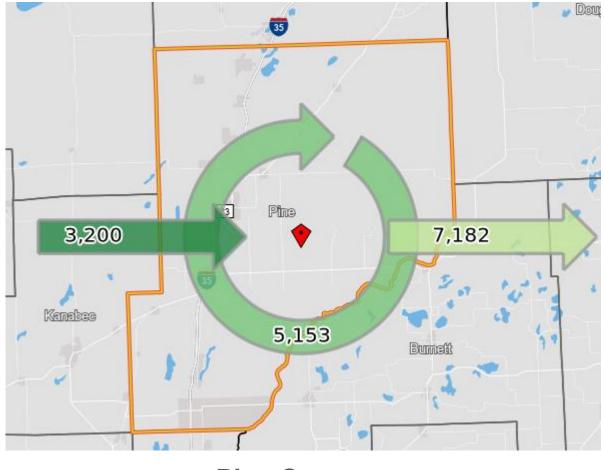




Megaregions Seattle Spokane Portland Helena Marquette Boise Minneapolis Albany Boston **Rapid City** Buffalo **Hartford** Eureka Milwaukee Detroit **New York** Cleveland Chicago Salt Lake City Philadelphia **Des Moines** Pittsburgh Omaha San Francisco Columbus Washington, D.C. Indianapolis Denver Kansas City St. Louis Richmond Fresno Louisville Las Vegas Raleigh Knoxville Charlotte Nashville Los Angeles Albuquerque Oklahoma City Memphis San Diego Phoenix Atlanta Birmingham Lubbock Savannah Dallas El Paso Odessa 500 km Tallahassee **New Orleans** Houston San Antonio Tampa Miami Brownsville

http://discovery.dartmouth.edu/megaregions/





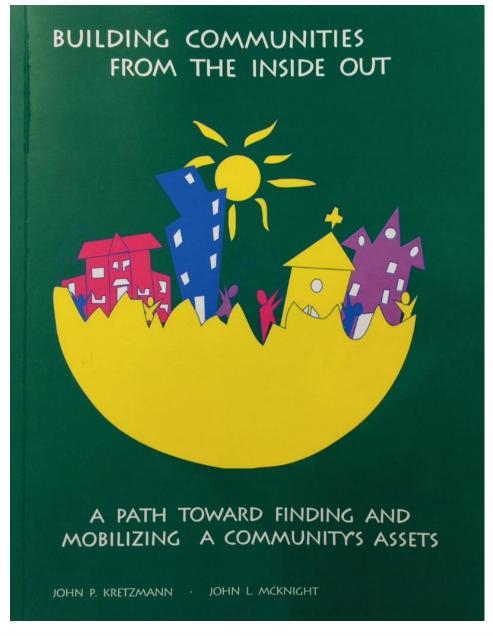
Pine County

Across Minnesota, just 51% work in the county they live.

https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/







Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets (1993).

By John P. Kretzmann, John L. McKnight

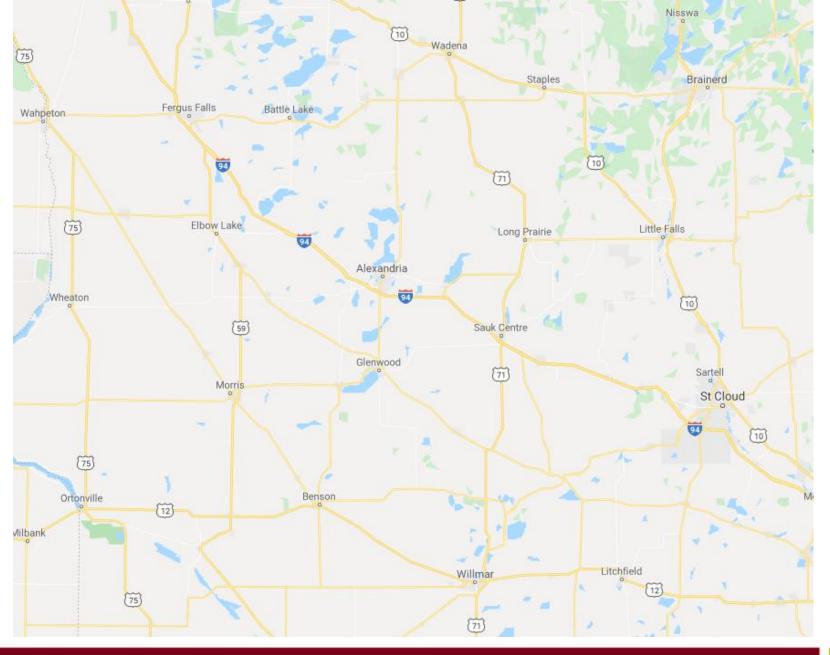
The Middle of Everywhere Exercise

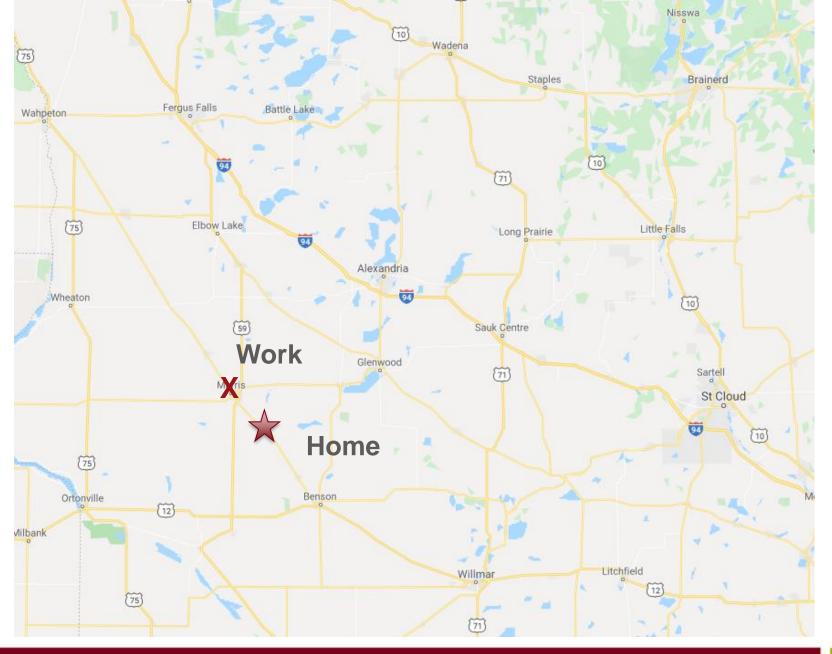
List 3-5 of your favorite assets in your region: Play and Recreate Brainerd Shop and Eat Out Long Prairie Alexandria St Cloud where you live where you work Circle around:

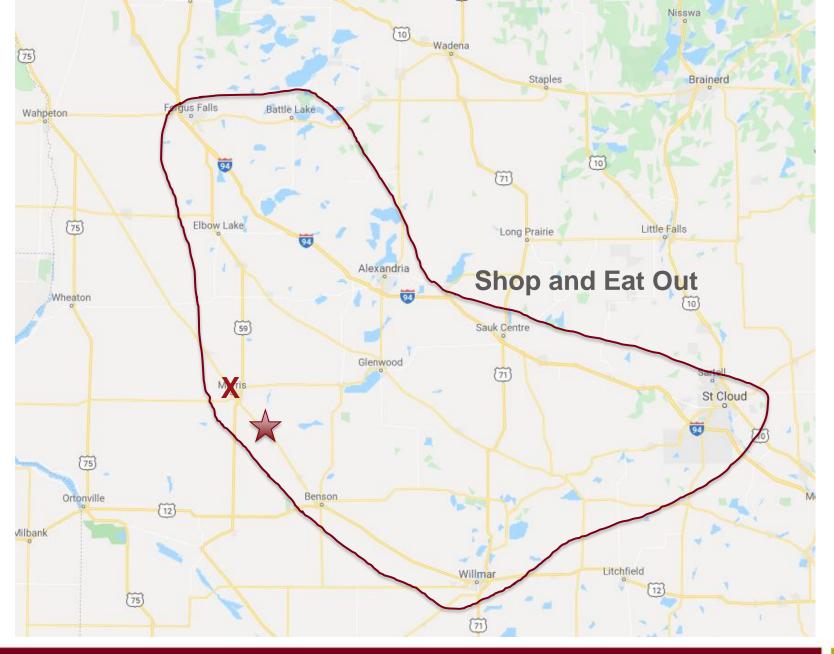
- Shop / eat out
- Play / recreate

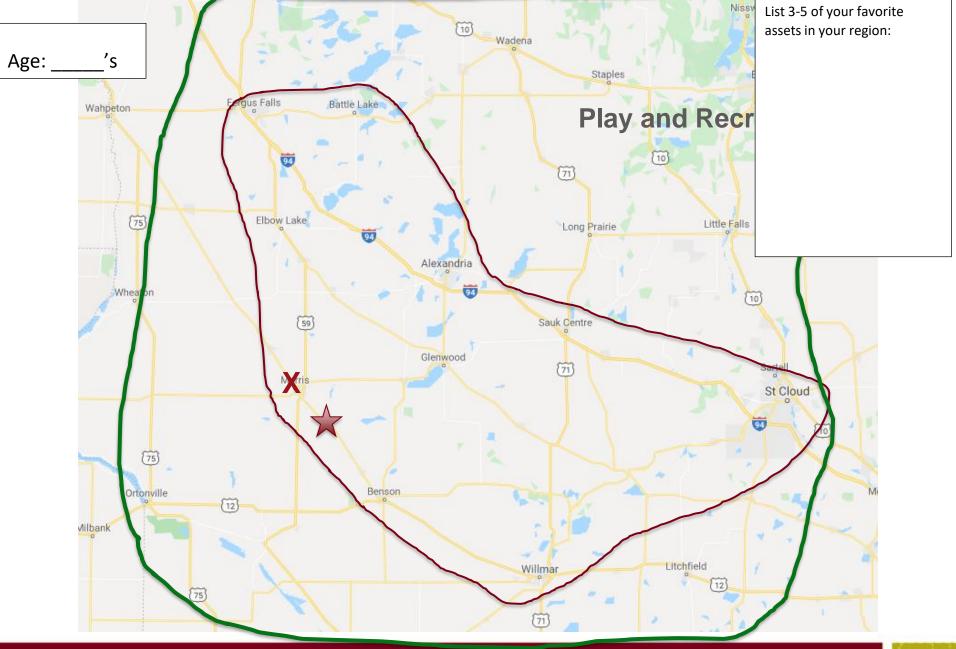


Age:









The Middle of Everywhere Exercise

assets in your region: Play and Recreate Brainerd Shop and Eat Out Long Prairie Alexandria St Cloud where you live where you work

Circle around:

- Shop / eat out
- Play / recreate

Age:

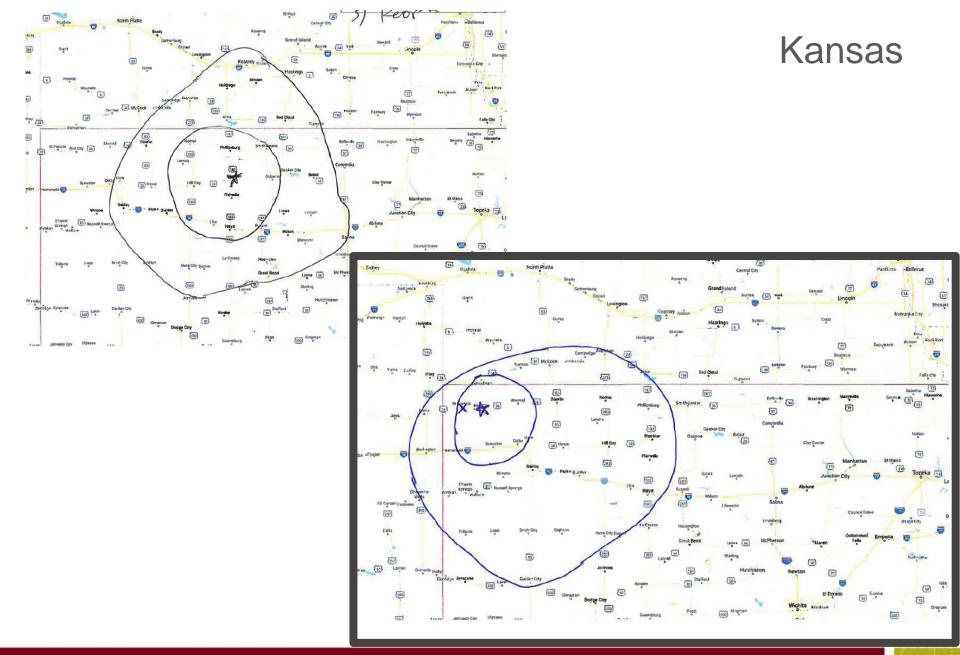
List 3-5 of your favorite

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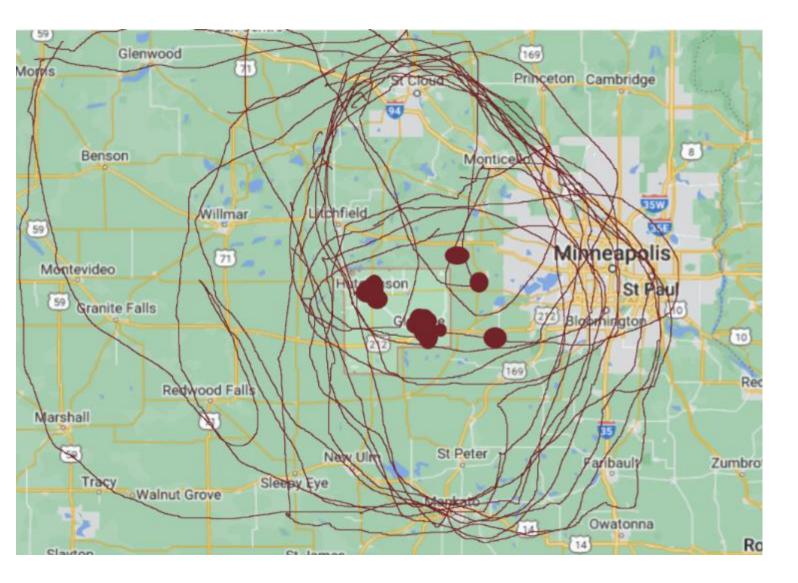
Age: _____'s

- Put your Age range in the box, such as 30s or 60s
- List 3-5 of your favorite assets in the region. These should be **real places**, **events**, etc. Not nebulous things like "hardworking people".

Minnesota Little Falls (19) Morns St Cloud Milbank Little Falls Hiockley [75] Long Prairie (109) Alexandria Mora Montevideo Wheaton Granite Falls South Centre 19 Clenwood (103) Redwood Falls St Cloud Cambridge [17] (3) [75] (14) Walnut Grove Mankato Ortonville Benson 1 The Lakes Milhank Minneapolis Minnetonka St Paul (n) -Montevideo Dawson Hutchinson Granite Falls (212) Blagmington Qliven Giencoe Jear Lake Carriby (169) Redwood Falls Marshall (71) (m) St Peter New Ulm. [59] (14) Walnut Grove Mankato The Lakes Dwatonna Flandreau Pipestone Slayton St James







https://www.mcleodfortomorrow.com/living-in-the-middle-of-everywhere/

MIDDLE OF EVERYWHERE

No town is a one-stop-shop

-Home -> Work: 30/45 minutes

-Home -> Eat/shop: 45/60 minutes

-Home -> Play - 2+ hours!





MIDDLE OF EVERYWHERE

- Regions expand as you approach 50s
- Assets vary significantly by age

MIDDLE OF EVERYWHERE

How can we make local decisions while at the same time respect the reality of lives?

The REGION is the primary unit of interest

Mayor, how do you market your town if you don't know what's going on around you?





Brain Gain Landing Page http://z.umn.edu/braingain/

Reddit: *Rural By Choice* /r/ruralbychoice

Rural Issues and Trends Webinars http://z.umn.edu/ruralwebinar/





