



FACT SHEET · RENEWING THE COUNTRYSIDE

Mission

Renewing the Countryside strengthens rural areas by championing and supporting rural communities, farmers, artists, entrepreneurs, educators, activists and others who are renewing the countryside through sustainable and innovative initiatives, businesses, and projects. Renewing the Countryside does this by sharing stories of rural renewal, building awareness and support for sustainable endeavors, connecting people interested in sustainable rural development to each other, providing practical assistance and networking opportunities for those working to improve rural America, and fostering connections between urban and rural people.

History

The Renewing the Countryside Project (RTC Project) began in 1998 as a partnership of a few individuals and organizations who, inspired by a publications from the Netherlands that showcased rural renewal across the Dutch countryside, set out to develop a similar project in the United States. In 2000, the RTC Project published a book and website that showcased “stories” of people and community groups in rural Minnesota who were finding ways to “renew the countryside” through endeavors that had positive environmental, economic, and social benefits. The book and website became the foundation of a national education campaign that uses real life examples to give people hope, inspiration, and practical ideas for strengthening their own rural communities.

In 2002, Renewing the Countryside II (RTC II) was incorporated as non-profit organization whose mission is to provide inspiration, ideas and assistance to individuals and communities who are looking for sustainable ways to strengthen their rural communities and reduce poverty. Our primary strategies are 1) to foster the development of sustainable rural communities and landscapes that balance environmental, social, and economic needs; and 2) to educate the larger public of the value of these sustainable rural endeavors to society and the planet and to engage their help in “renewing the countryside.”

We accomplish our goals by sharing stories of rural renewal, building public awareness and support for sustainable endeavors, connecting people interested in sustainable rural development to each other, providing practical assistance and networking opportunities for those working to improve rural America, and fostering connections between urban and rural people.

In 2004, a sister organization, Renewing the Countryside, Inc., was incorporated to assist other groups across the country in developing their own publications related to rural sustainability.

Also, in 2004, the Rural Renaissance Network was established as a program within Renewing the Countryside. The Rural Renaissance Network (RRN) aims to empower the rural renaissance movement by providing educational resources and how-to information to individuals, families and communities wishing to support “right livelihood” and creative, healthy, ecologically mindful and socially responsible living in rural and small town communities across North America.

