

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NABRIN planning committee was convened by NCLIS early in 1984 to "examine and evaluate the concept of a National Advisory Board on Rural Information Needs, [and] determine if there is a need for such a board and what its purpose would be, provided the U.S. Department of Agriculture supports this effort." Agreement to participate in the planning committee study was quickly obtained from the Office of the Secretary, U.S.D.A. The fifteen-person committee represented a balance of interests from concerned U.S.D.A. agencies, the Commission, and the library and information communities was appointed by the Commission. The committee was chaired by the program officer for NCLIS's National Rural Library and Information Services Development Program; the vice chairperson was the Special Assistant to U.S.D.A.'s Assistant Secretary for Administration. The NABRIN planning committee met regularly throughout 1984 and early 1985 at U.S.D.A.

At its second meeting, the planning committee considered three basic questions: (1) is the issue of inadequate rural information services important enough to take nationwide action to bring about change and improvement; (2) is there a need for improved information services in rural areas, and would greater accessibility to such services have enough of a positive economic and social impact on rural areas to warrant extraordinary effort to correct the situation; and (3) would a high level National Advisory Board on Rural Information Needs (NABRIN) be prestigious enough to cause the private and public sector information providers and utilities to recognize and respond to the information needs of rural citizens and communities. Committee consensus was that the issues were important enough to pursue the idea of a high level board which would focus national attention on the information needs of rural America.

The committee determined that despite the vast informational resources available and the many existing networks and delivery systems now in place, most of rural America is not able to obtain the kinds of information necessary for local community officials in rural areas to govern these communities well. The lack of strong libraries and other informational resources in rural areas also inhibits or limits their ability to attract important new revenue-producing resources, businesses and institutions. Adequate health care, legal services, schools, family services and a host of other essential services depend on adequate information resources. An increasing number of responsible observers, including rural sociologists, political scientists, librarians, economists, local government officials and others are writing and testifying that despite the new information and telecommunications technologies, the information gap between rural and urban communities is widening rather than decreasing. Although the content costs of information and data bases are still declining,

the higher costs that seem to be associated with large scale telecommunications services more than offset the low cost of the information and data that could be used by the rural consumer.

#### THE NABRIN REPORT AND THE NABRIN CHARTER

The report consists of four main parts: introduction, background, cooperative planning, and the proposed NABRIN charter. Two items in the List of Appendices are particularly important: Public Law 91-345, and "U.S. Department of Agriculture," Chapter 55, Code of Federal Regulations. For the convenience of the reader, only those parts of both laws that apply directly to a proposed NABRIN are shown.

1. Introduction: The introduction is a very brief statement about the innovative process which led to the proposal to establish a National Advisory Board on Rural Information Needs in the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
2. Background: The background statement gives an overview of the many problems of rural America and how the information age is passing it by. It finishes with a list of eleven important informational imperatives for rural America.
3. Cooperative National Planning to Meet Rural Information Needs. This section discusses in some detail the four years of effort by the Commission to focus national attention the information needs of the nation's rural areas, and how this effort has led to the proposal to establish a National Advisory Board on Rural Information Needs in U.S.D.A.
4. Charter: The proposed charter for NABRIN is the heart of the report. It would establish a twenty member NABRIN in U.S.D.A. to advise and assist the Secretary of Agriculture in focusing national attention on rural information needs, and in the development of policies, strategies and action programs that will be responsive to these needs.

#### IV. MEMBERS: NABRIN PLANNING BOARD

Gerald J. Sophar, Chairperson, Administrator For Federal/Local Community Information Programs, National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, Washington, D. C.

Joseph Caponio, Director, National Technical Information Service, Springfield, Virginia.

Barry Carr, Senior Analyst, Environment and National Resources Policy Division, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

Daniel H. Carter, Vice-President, Strategic Business Services, Walter Ulrich Consulting, Houston, Texas.

Clarence L. Coffindafer, State Librarian, South Dakota Library and Archives, Pierre, South Dakota.

Howard Diesslin, Associate Director, Extension, Food and Agriculture, National Association State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC), Washington, D. C.

Ansel W. Doll, General Manager, Pioneer Public TV, KWCM, Appleton, Minnesota.

Robyn Frank, Chief, Food and Nutrition Information Center, National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, Maryland.

David Holder, Program Leader, Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Melvin Josephs, Associate Director, Office of Program and Product Management, National Technical Information Service, Springfield, VA.

Ernie Matthias, Vice-Chairperson, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

George A. Sands, Jr., Administrator, Caroline County Public Library, Denton, Maryland.

Neil Storms, Rural Policy Coordination Officer, Office of Rural Development Policy, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

Bernard Vavrek, Coordinator, Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship, College of Library Science, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, Clarion, Pennsylvania.

Margaret Warden, Commissioner, National Commission on Libraries and Information Science; Member, Montana State Advisory Council for Libraries, Great Falls, Montana.

## MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission is composed of the Librarian of Congress and fourteen Members appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. Commissioners' terms expire on July 19 of the year indicated in parentheses.

Elinor M. Hashim (1986)

Bessie Boehm Moore (1988)

Helmut Alpers (1984)

Gordon Ambach (1985)

Patricia Barbour (1989)

Charles Benton (1985)

Daniel J. Boorstin\*

Daniel H. Carter (1989)

Daniel W. Casey (1989)

Carlos A. Cuadra (1984)

Wanda L. Forbes (1988)

Paulette H. Holahan (1985)

John E. Juergensmeyer (1987)

Byron Leeds (1986)

Jerald C. Newman (1987)

Margaret Phelan (1988)

Margaret S. Warden (1984)

William J. Welsh

Julia Li Wu (1987)

---

\*William J. Welsh, Deputy Librarian, serves for Dr. Boorstin

## RESOLUTION

Be it resolved

That a study and planning committee be convened by the Commission to examine and evaluate the concept of a National Advisory Board on Rural Information Needs (NABRIN), determine if there is a need for such a board and what its purpose would be, provided the U.S. Department of Agriculture supports this effort, and

That the Planning Committee be charged to prepare a report by June 30, 1984, if at all possible, or as soon thereafter as it can, on a NABRIN's purpose, functions, alternative institutional locations, possible membership formats and organizational structures, and funding mechanisms.

Authority and Responsibility  
of the  
National Commission on Libraries  
and Information Science

APPENDIX

Public Law 91-345  
91st Congress, S. 1519  
July 20, 1970  
As amended by Public Law 93-29, Section 802, May 3, 1973  
An Act

To establish a National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "National Commission on Libraries and Information Science Act".

STATEMENT OF POLICY

SEC. 2. The Congress hereby affirms that library and information services adequate to meet the needs of the people of the United States are essential to achieve national goals and to utilize most effectively the Nation's educational resources and that the Federal Government will cooperate with State and local governments and public and private agencies in assuring optimum provision of such services.

COMMISSION ESTABLISHED

SEC. 3. (a) . . . . (b) . . . .

CONTRIBUTIONS

SEC. 4. . . . .

FUNCTIONS

SEC. 5. (a) The Commission shall have the primary responsibility for developing or recommending overall plans for, and advising the appropriate governments and agencies on, the policy set forth in section 2. In carrying out that responsibility, the Commission shall---

(1) advise the President and the Congress on the implementation of national policy by such statements, presentations, and reports as it deems appropriate;

(2) conduct studies, surveys, and analyses of the library and informational needs of the Nation, including the special library and informational needs of rural areas, of economically,

socially, or culturally deprived persons, and of elderly persons, and the means by which these needs may be met through information centers, through the libraries of elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education, and through public, research, special, and other types of libraries;

(3) appraise the adequacies and deficiencies of current library and information resources and services and evaluate the effectiveness of current library and information science programs;

(4) develop overall plans for meeting national library and informational needs and for the coordination of activities at the Federal, State, and local levels, taking into consideration all of the library and informational resources of the Nation to meet those needs;

(5) be authorized to advise Federal, State, local, and private agencies regarding library and information sciences;

(6) promote research and development activities which will extend and improve the Nation's library and information-handling capability as essential links in the national communications networks;

(7) submit to the President and the Congress (not later than January 31 of each year) a report on its activities during the preceding fiscal year; and

(8) make and publish such additional reports as it deems to be necessary, including, but not limited to, reports of consultants, transcripts of testimony, summary reports, and reports of other Commission findings, studies, and recommendations.

(b) The Commission is authorized to contract with Federal agencies and other public and private agencies to carry out any of its functions under subsection (a) and to publish and disseminate such reports, findings, studies, and records as it deems appropriate.

(c) The Commission is further authorized to conduct such hearings at such times and places as it deems appropriate for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(d) The heads of all Federal agencies are, to the extent not prohibited by law, directed to cooperate with the Commission in carrying out the purposes of this Act.

#### MEMBERSHIP

SEC. 6. (a) . . . .

#### AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 7. . . . .

AGRICULTURE

7 § 2201

CHAPTER 55--DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Sec.

2204b. . . . .

§2201. Establishment of Department

There shall be at the seat of government a Department of Agriculture, the general design and duties of which shall be to acquire and to diffuse among the people of the United States useful information on subjects connected with agriculture, rural development, aquaculture, and human nutrition, in the most general and comprehensive sense of those terms, and to procure, propagate, and distribute among the people new and valuable seeds and plants.

As amended . . . . .

REORGANIZATION PLAN NO. 2 OF 1953

. . . . .

§ 2202. Executive Department; Secretary . . . . .

§ 2204. General duties of Secretary; advisory functions; research and development

(a) The Secretary of Agriculture shall procure and preserve all information concerning agriculture, rural development, aquaculture, and human nutrition which he can obtain by means of books and correspondence, and by practical and scientific experiments, accurate records of which experiments shall be kept in his office, by the collection of statistics, and by any other appropriate means within his power; . . . . and he shall advise the President, other members of his Cabinet, and the Congress on policies and programs designed to improve the quality of life for people living in the rural and nonmetropolitan regions of the Nation.

(b) The Secretary is authorized to initiate or expand research and development efforts related to solution of problems of rural water supply, rural sewage and solid waste management, rural housing, rural industrialization, and technology appropriate to small- and moderate-sized family farming operations, and any other problem that the Secretary may determine has an effect upon the economic development or the quality of life in rural areas.

As amended . . . . .

§ 2204a. Rural development; utilization of non-Federal offices; location of field units; interchange of personnel and facilities



The Secretary of Agriculture shall utilize to the maximum extent practicable State, regional, district, county, local, or other Department of Agriculture offices to enhance rural development and shall to the maximum extent practicable provide directly, or, in the case of agencies outside of the Department of Agriculture, through arrangements with the heads of such agencies for---

(1) the location of all field units of the Federal Government concerned with rural development in the appropriate Department of Agriculture offices covering the geographical areas most similar to those covered by such field units, and

(2) the interchange of personnel and facilities in each such office to the extent necessary or desirable to achieve the most efficient utilization of such personnel and facilities and provide the most effective assistance in the development of rural areas in accordance with State rural development plans.

As amended . . . .

§ 2204b. Rural development policy--Coordination of nationwide rural development program using services of executive branch departments and agencies and State and local governments

(a) The Secretary of Agriculture shall provide leadership within the executive branch for, and shall assume responsibility for coordinating, a nationwide rural development program using the services of executive branch departments and agencies, including, but not limited to, the agencies, bureaus, offices, and services of the Department of Agriculture, in coordination with rural development programs of State and local governments.

Policy development; systematic review of Federal programs; access to information; development of process to receive and assess needs, goals, etc.; cooperative efforts with Federal departments and agencies; public hearings and comments

(b)(1) The Secretary shall conduct a systematic review of Federal programs affecting rural areas to (A) determine whether such areas are benefiting from such programs in an equitable proportion to the benefits received by urban areas and (B) identify any factors that may restrict accessibility to such programs in rural areas or limit participation in such programs.

(2) Subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, the Secretary may secure directly from any Federal department or agency information necessary to carry out the Secretary's duties under this section. Upon request of the Secretary under this paragraph, the head of any such Federal department or agency shall furnish such information to the Secretary.

(3) The Secretary shall develop a process through which multi-state, State, substate, and local rural development needs, goals, objectives, plans, and recommendations can be received and assessed on a continuing basis. Such process may include the use of those rural development experts, advisors, and consultants that the Secretary deems appropriate, as well as the establishment of temporary advisory committees under the terms of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

(4) The Secretary may undertake cooperative efforts with other Federal departments and agencies to improve the coordination and effectiveness of Federal programs, services, and actions affecting rural areas. The Secretary may request the heads of other Federal departments and agencies to participate in any working groups that the Secretary deems necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.

(5) The Secretary may hold public hearings and receive comments on any matter that the Secretary determines may have a significant impact on rural development or the economic development of rural communities.

Rural development strategy and annual updates; preparation and scope; purposes; time for updates; public hearings and suggestions and recommendations; transmittal to Congressional committees; analysis of budgetary considerations and factors; evaluation and recommendations regarding implementation and revisions

(c)(1) The Secretary shall prepare a comprehensive rural development strategy based on the needs, goals, objectives, plans, and recommendations of local communities, substate areas, States, and multistate regions, which is designed to--

(A) maximize the effectiveness, increase the responsiveness, and improve the delivery of Federal programs to rural areas;

(B) increase the coordination of Federal programs with the development needs, objectives, and resources of local communities, substate areas, States and multistate regions; and

(C) achieve the most effective combinations of Federal, State, and local resources to meet the needs of rural areas for orderly growth and development.

(2) The rural development strategy shall take into account the need to--

(A) improve the economic well-being of all rural residents and alleviate the problems of low income, elderly, minority, and otherwise disadvantaged rural residents;

(B) improve the business and employment opportunities, occupational training and employment services, health care services, educational opportunities, energy utilization and availability, housing, transportation, community services, community facilities, water supplies, sewage and solid waste management systems, credit availability, and accessibility to and delivery of private and public financial resources in the maintenance and creation of jobs in rural areas;

(C) improve State and local government management capabilities, institutions, and programs related to rural development and expand educational and training opportunities for State and local officials, particularly in small rural communities;

(D) strengthen the family farm system; and

(E) maintain and protect the environment and natural resources of rural areas.

- (3) The rural . . . .
- (4) The Secretary . . . .
- (5) The rural . . . .
- (6) The rural . . . .

Strategy implementation; goals

(d) The Secretary shall ensure the effective implementation of the rural development strategy and maximize coordination of Federal programs affecting rural areas through a systematic effort to---

(1) improve communication and encourage cooperation among Federal departments and agencies in the administration of rural development programs;

(2) eliminate conflicts, duplication, and gaps in program coverage, and resolve contradictions and inconsistencies in the objectives, administration, and effects of rural development programs;

(3) facilitate the sharing or common location of field offices of Federal agencies administering similar or complementary programs and unification of delivery systems, where feasible, to maximize convenience and accessibility of such agencies and programs to rural residents;

(4) facilitate and expedite joint funding of rural projects through Federal programs;

(5) correct administrative problems in Federal programs that delay or hinder the effective delivery of services, assistance, or benefits to rural areas; and

(6) simplify, standardize, and reduce the complexity of applications, reports, and other forms required under Federal rural development programs.

Pub.L. 92-419 . . . .

§ 2210. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture; appointment . . . .

§ 2211. Same; duties . . . .

§ 2211a. Under Secretary of Agriculture for International Affairs and Commodity Programs; appointment . . . .

§ 2211b. Under Secretary of Agriculture for Small Community and Rural Development; appointment, etc. . . . .

§ 2212b. Additional Assistant Secretary of Agriculture; appointment, duties and compensation . . . .