

Eddy Berry's work is part of an award-winning project

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Social, Economic and Environmental Causes and Consequences of Demographic Change in Rural America project wins award

Dr. E. Helen (Eddy) Berry, professor emeritus, a researcher for the WAAESD experiment station project W4001: Social, Economic and Environmental Causes and Consequences of Demographic Change in Rural America, a project that has been awarded the 2020 National ESS Excellence in Multistate Research Award!

The National Excellence in Multistate Research Award recognizes experiment station scientists who are conducting exemplary research and outreach efforts across multiple states. W4001 won the 2020 Western Region Award, which meant that the nomination was sent up for national award contention. The national committee agreed that not only is W4001 the best in the West but the best in the nation!

W4001 and its predecessors (W2001, W3001, W1001, and related research committees that came before) have built a sustained group of rural population scholars over multiple decades. Many early and mid-career members, of whom Dr. Berry is one, were mentored by participants of W4001's predecessors. This award reflects the impacts of not only the current 5-year project but also the critical

scientific groundwork, substantial human capital, and incomparable support provided by the predecessor committees.

The impacts of the group's research have been many and varied. W4001's researchers have shown that the rural population was shrinking for the first time on record, due to young adult outmigration, fewer births, and increased mortality. The group has informed anti-poverty policies through its 3+ decades of research on rural poverty and economic livelihoods. Their research has changed official measurements of poverty and underemployment, and thereby the way safety net resources are distributed. And W4001 has influenced how "rural" is defined and measured, and capacity-building of government officials, non-profits, and rural community development practitioners. W4001's research has heavily influenced the development of the U.S. statistical geography system, including the periodic updating of the system, development of the "micropolitan area" concept, and new U.S. commuting zone (labor market area) delineations.

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