

## Pulling It Together As RC&Ds Can

Resource Conservation and Development Councils are known for their ability to pull together divergent entities or resources when the tasks at hand require the involvement of a number of organizations or facets.

The Sureste RC&D proved this out in July when they spearheaded an outreach initiative to gain greater participation in USDA programs from minority landowners and limited resource and beginning farmers and ranchers.

The USDA continues to take steps to ensure its programs are accessible to all who may benefit from its services, and makes extra efforts to reach out to potential participants who may not otherwise be familiar with its various agencies and opportunities. This was the driving factor that encouraged Dan Abeyta from Farm Service Agency to approach Juan Gauna, Sureste RC&D coordinator, about orchestrating a series of workshops in southeastern New Mexico that featured information about Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and Rural Development.

On occasion it is hard to get a project done because it requires working across a broad area or just does not fit any particular niche – yet it meets the mission of an RC&D and is important to that rural area. The Sureste RC&D was an ideal candidate to pull together the workshops for the targeted groups since it has as its mission conservation planning, creation and retention of local businesses in rural communities, and improvement of land and water resources - factors at the core of the agencies participating in this project.

Gauna rolled up his sleeves, sent an article to area newspapers, and worked with a radio station that



would play a public service announcement they created with his assistance. With a team from FSA consisting of Cruzita Aceves, Gary Miller and Lynn Muncy, they developed a timetable, chose locations, developed an agenda, and secured speakers. Clark Taylor, RC&D coordinator from the South Central Mountain RC&D, pitched in by moderating the meetings held in Carrizozo and Tularosa. The other sites selected for the workshops included Artesia, Loving, and Lovington.

The Sureste RC&D had the unique ability to do what might have been very difficult for others to accomplish. So, you might ask – how can my local RC&D help me?

For that answer and more information and a referral to the RC&D nearest you, contact Steve Kadas at (505)761-4422.