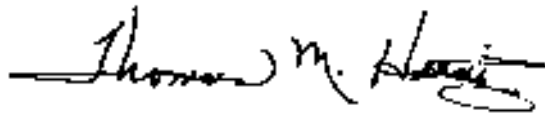

Preface

Rural America has always been as resilient as the tough-minded people who settled it and still call it home. Yet signs are mounting that a new approach to rural policy is needed if rural America's Main Streets are to keep pace with the rest of the nation.

Partnering with the Bank's Community Affairs Department, the Center for the Study of Rural America hosted its second conference, April 30–May 1, 2001. *Exploring Policy Options for a New Rural America* brought together a distinguished group of rural experts from the United States and abroad to share their ideas and experiences and to shed light on which policy options offer the greatest promise for the future of rural America.

Conference participants agreed that rural America has some exciting new policy options that grow out of a new focus on regions and opportunities for collaboration. We trust you will find these proceedings enlightening as rural America readies itself for the unique challenges of the 21st century.



Thomas M. Hoenig
President and Chief Executive Officer
Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City

September 2001
