

Stand Up for Rural America - Rural Community Developers Network Reporter

Volume 7, Number 12 July 1, 2005

STAND UP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

In the coming months, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will hold a series of public forums at various U.S. locations to obtain public input for the development of the 2007 Farm Bill. The dates, locations, and times of the forums will be announced in USDA press releases (<http://www.usda.gov>). The first Farm Bill Forum will be held in **Nashville, Tenn. on July 7 from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. CDT** at RFD-TV Northstar Studios. Six topics have been identified to provide a framework for the forums. The primary topics addressed at the forums will reflect various concerns affecting rural America such as commodity, conservation, and rural economic development issues.

In addition, some forums will be dedicated to other important programs authorized by the farm bill such as food assistance, research and education programs. Comments will be accepted at public forums and may also be submitted electronically via the Internet at the USDA home page www.usda.gov by selecting "Farm Bill Forums," by email to FarmBill@usda.gov or by mail to Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns, Farm Bill, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3355.

POLICY UPDATE

The House Financial Services Committee has approved a bill to strengthen regulatory oversight of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Home Loan Banks. In an important move for affordable housing, the bill would require Fannie and Freddie to use 5% of their after-tax profits for an Affordable Housing Fund. Some observers project AHF contributions could grow to \$500 million or more annually. The funds would be targeted to serve families with extremely low or very low incomes. The Senate Banking Committee plans to consider companion legislation within a month.

FUNDING AND FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services (OCS) is accepting applications for Assets for Independence (AFI) Program funding throughout 2005. AFI is a Federal program that explores ways to help low-income people become economically self-sufficient. AFI provides five-year grants of up to \$1,000,000 (average awards are \$300,000) to local and state AFI Projects that provide financial education to clients and assist them with saving money in Individual Savings Accounts (IDAs) for the goal of acquiring one of three long-term assets (a first home, post-secondary education, or a small business). Visit <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/assetbuilding/applying.html> or call the AFI Resource Center 202 401-4626 or AFIProgram@acf.hhs.gov.

Tobacco Policy Change: A Collaborative for Healthier Communities and States is a national initiative supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. It has grants available up to \$150,000 to support projects designed to positively change tobacco policy through partnerships with groups most affected by tobacco use. **Proposals must be submitted online by August 1.** Additional information is available at www.rwjf.org/tobaccopolitichange or contact: Beverly J. Alston at 888 795-3636 or tobaccopolitichange@rwjf.org.

Daily Points of Light Awards Program wants to honor people and organizations engaged in exemplary volunteer work and community service. Awards are made in several areas: continuing relationships with caring people, safe communities, a healthy start for a healthy future, quality education for all, opportunities for young people to serve and community mobilization. Nominations may be made by letter or on an official nomination form throughout the year with selections made quarterly. **Next deadlines are August 1 & November 1.** Contact information: POLF, 1400 I Street, NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC, 20005-2208, 202 965-1800, www.pointsoflight.org.

HHS' Administration for Children and Families is accepting proposals that improve child well-being by removing barriers to and strengthening family formation and healthy marriage in underserved communities. \$1.5 million is available for up to 10 awards. **The deadline is August 8.** Visit www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2005-ACF-ACYF-CA-0089.html or call Julie Lee, Children's Bureau, 202 205-8640. E-mail: jlee@acf.hhs.gov.

Gifts In Kind International has applications to receive Lotus computer software. Donations are limited to three copies of any product per organization per calendar year. Contact information: GIKI, 333 North Fairfax St., Alexandria, VA 22314-2632, 703 836-2121, <http://www.giftsinkind.org/newhome/directory.asp>.

TRAINING EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

Success Planning Success! Preparing for Inevitable Transition, a session for CDC leadership from the LISC Organizational Development Initiative (ODI) will be on July 20 at 2:00 p.m. EDT. Cathy Peterson, President of Executive Focus in Vermilion, Ohio and Tanya Allmond, Executive Director of Northeastern Neighborhood Development Corporation in Cleveland will have an in-depth discussion with ODI's Shelia Slemp about how one community development organization is leaving nothing to chance related to the departure of its executive director. For more details, visit www.lisc.org/resources/2005/07/succession_8040output.asp.shtml.

The Community Land Trust Conference will be held August 17-19 in Portland, Oregon. It is sponsored by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and others. Visit www.communitylots.org for more information.

The Economic Development Finance Service (EDFS) will hold a Loan Fund Management Training course in Seattle, August 25-26. For more information, visit <http://www.nado.org/edfs/seattle05.pdf> or call Bill Amt at 202 624-8467 or bamt@nado.org.

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INFORMATION AND OTHER RESOURCES

The State of the Nation's Housing 2005, published by Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies, reports that in 2004, housing markets posted record growth.

Homeownership reached an all-time high of 69 percent, with households of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicities joining the home-buying boom. The report also finds that strong levels of immigration are bolstering household growth and productivity gains are driving increases in real incomes. For more information and to download the full report, visit www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/markets/son2005/index.html.

A new issue of the Main Street Economist from the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, contains "A Review of the Federal Role in Regional Economic Development." The report by Mark Drabenstott, director of the Center for the Study of Rural America, examines what the federal government's future role could be in regional economic development. Visit

<http://www.kansascityfed.org/RuralCenter/RuralMain.htm>.

Children of low-income families who receive housing subsidies are less likely to be undernourished than those not receiving such aid, especially if the families are "food insecure," according to "Subsidized Housing and Children's Nutritional Status" in the June 2005 ARCHIVES OF PEDIATRIC & ADOLESCENT MEDICINE. The study was conducted in six large cities. A press release and abstract are at <http://dcc2.bumc.bu.edu/csnappublic> (click "what's new"). Print copies are free from Nicole Neault, nneault@bu.edu, 617-638-5850.

USDA's Economic Research Service identifies 277 counties (13.5% of all nonmetro counties) as retirement destinations, scattered around the country in both cool and warm climates. Of the 622 low-education counties nationwide, 80% are nonmetro and many of those are in places with large minority populations and high poverty rates. These articles and others in the June issue of AMBER WAVES magazine are free at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/June05/>.

Send information on funding opportunities, events, publications, resources or rural related policy issues to: reporter@ruralamerica.org. Announcements will be published at our discretion based on space and applicability. To receive the Network Reporter by email contact us at: info@ruralamerica.org.

