

Stand Up for Rural America - Rural Community Developers Network Reporter

Volume 8, Number 13 July 15, 2006

STAND UP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Two *Stand Up* Steering Committee member representatives participated in a Senate Democratic Outreach and Steering Committee meeting on Revitalizing Rural America. Sen. Hillary Clinton (NY) chairs the Committee and Sen. Blanche Lincoln (AR) chairs the rural task force. Both were there. So were Senators Harry Reid (NV), Minority Leader, Daniel Akaka (HI); Mark Dayton (MN), Byron Dorgan (ND), Tom Harkin (IA) and Ken Salazar (CO).

POLICY UPDATE

On July 7th USDA Secretary Mike Johanns released a comprehensive analysis of rural development programs compiled by USDA economists. It is the third in a series of Farm Bill Theme papers. The first addresses Risk Management; the second addresses Conservation and the Environment. This paper describes the current state of rural development, and discusses and evaluates current key rural development programs. USDA estimates that in FY 05 its business programs created over 73,000 jobs and assisted over 12,000 businesses. It also invested \$4.24 billion to assist 44,224 families to obtain homes and provided \$66 million to rehabilitate homes for more than 11,700 very low-income families. The paper concludes with three general policy alternatives. These are: 1) Maintain the Structure and Tools of Existing Programs, But Refine Program Targeting. 2) Focus on New Business Formation Supported by Rural Private Investment and 3) Move Toward Greater Regionalized Funding. The paper is available at <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

FUNDING AND FINANCING OPPORTUNITES

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has \$4.5 million available in grants to improve children's mental health. The grants should be used to reduce emotional and behavioral problems among children in low-income, refugee and immigrant-dense communities. **The deadline is July 28.** For more information call 888-631-9989 or visit <http://www.rwjf.org>

The Department of Health and Human Services has one \$150,000 grant available to improve the legal understanding of CSBG grants. This grant should be used to strengthen and expand the capacity and ability of CSBG eligible entities to deal with legal issues. **The deadline is July 31.** For more information, contact Anita Wright at 800-281-9519 or visit <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants>

The Economic Development Administration has approximately \$700,000 available in funds for technical assistance projects to promote competitiveness and innovation in urban and rural regions throughout the United States and its territories. By working in conjunction with its research partners, EDA will help states, local government and community based organizations to achieve their highest economic potential. **The deadline is August**

1. For more information contact William P. Kittredge at 202-482-5442 or email wkittredge@eda.doc.gov or visit <http://www.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/FFON.xml>

The Administration for Children and Families division of the US department of Health and Human Services has a \$1 million grant available to improve the social and emotional outcomes and enhance the school readiness of children. **The deadline is August 2.** For more information, contact Renee Perthuis at 866-796-1591 or visit <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/>

The Rural Housing Service of USDA has \$6 million available in grants for the RCDI program. These grants should be used to provide financial and technical assistance to recipients to develop their capacity and ability to undertake projects related to housing, community facilities or community and economic development. Applicants are required to provide matching funds in an amount at least equal to the Federal grant. **The deadline is October 10.** For more information, call William Kenney at 202-720-1506, email William.kenney@wdc.usda.gov or visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/rcdi/index.htm>

TRAINING EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines will be holding its 2006 regional conference August 8-9 in Sioux Falls, SD. The theme of this year's conference is "Capitalizing on Rural America." There will be sessions that address the latest economic forecasts to sessions that address entrepreneurship and successful community development. The conference will address how to grow rural areas where more than 90 percent of the bank's members are located and how to grow your balance sheet. Registration is complimentary. For more information, call 800-544-3452 (ext 1159), email ewhalen@fhldb.com or visit http://www.fhldb.com/au_calendar.htm

The Celebrating Rural Georgia Conference will be held August 21 - 23 in Augusta, GA. The theme is "One Georgia, Many Dreams." Topics such as Innovative Agriculture, Housing Alternatives, Economic Development and numerous others will be covered. For more information, contact Alec Young at ayoung@dca.state.ga.us or visit <http://www.celebratingruralgeorgia.org>

NeighborWorks' Rural Chautauqua "Reaching the Promise of Rural America" will be held August 29 to September 1 in Polson, MT. Come join rural community developers from the NeighborWorks network and others around the country examine national rural issues and applaud local successes. For more information, call 800-438-5547, email nti@nw.org or visit <http://www.nw.org/network/training/calendar>

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Information and other Resources

The USDA's Economic Research Service has issued a report on understanding U.S. farm exits. This report shows that the rates of exit and entry in farming are about the same; around 9 to 10 percent. It also finds that the probability of exit is higher for recent entrants than for older and also for farms operated by blacks than for farms operated by whites. For more information please visit <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR21/>

The Annie E. Casey Foundation recently released the 2006 Kids Count Book. It reports that national trends in child well-being are no longer improving in the steady way they did in the late 1990s with more than 13 million children living in poverty in 2004; an increase of 1 million over four years. It shows that 3 out of the 10 child well-being indicators have worsened since 2000. For more information and to read the data book online please visit <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/sld/databook.jsp>

On July 7 Fannie Mae announced a mortgage relief plan

for those homeowners affected by the flooding and mudslides that began on June 23, 2006 in Pennsylvania. With Fannie Mae's assistance, appropriate relief measures may include suspending the borrower's mortgage payments for up to three months, reducing the borrower's mortgage payments for up to 18 months, or in more severe cases, creating an extended loan payback plan for the borrower. For more information on mortgage relief, homeowners who have experienced disaster hardships should contact the lender to whom they send their monthly mortgage payment or visit <http://www.fanniemae.com/newsreleases/>

The Progressive Farmer recently released their second annual "Best Places to Live in Rural America" list. Topping the list is Ontario County, NY followed by Union County, SD and Oconee County, GA. The article features important statistics for the top 200 counties along with photographs of the top 10. It also gives the reader the option to get their own customized list based on their personal preferences and importance of the various criteria used. For more information visit <http://www.progressivefarmer.com/farmer/bestplaces/>

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.

