

# Stand Up for Rural America - Rural Community Developers Network Reporter

Volume 9, Number 9 May 15, 2007

## STAND UP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

In our first installment of the presidential candidates' rural development positions, we introduce Senator Hillary Clinton's legislative initiatives. She has promised the legislation to create good jobs, develop new sources of capital, and invest in education, healthcare, broadband and value-added agriculture to grow local economies. **The Rural Investment to Strengthen our Economy Act (Rural RISE Act)** would assure the continuation of the Access to Credit for Rural Entrepreneurs and Microenterprises program and provides small business tax credits and create a special classification of employer tax credit for small businesses that locate in rural counties. It would provide \$50 million for grants to qualified intermediaries to provide technical and financial assistance to assist rural businesses in re-tooling for the New Economy. **The Rural Broadband Initiatives Act** would establish a Rural Broadband Innovation Fund to explore and develop cutting edge broadband delivery technologies to reach underserved rural areas. It creates a policy and action framework to ensure that the federal government employs an effective and comprehensive strategy to deploy broadband service and access in the rural areas of the United States. **The School Food Fresh Act** would link local and regional farmers with local schools, systems to provide more fresh fruit, vegetables, etc. to school children. It would establish a grants program to evaluate and recommend product specifications for a variety of different commodities used in the USDA feeding programs. **Mandatory funding for the USDA Intermediary Relending Program (IRP)**. Based on USDA estimates, an investment of \$100 million would yield more than \$200 million in loans, leveraging an additional \$1.5 billion and create or save about 180,000 jobs. For more information, go to <http://clinton.senate.gov/news/statements/details.cfm?id=273081&&>

## POLICY UPDATE

Congratulations and thanks are due to Congressman Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), co-founder and chair of the bipartisan Rural Housing Caucus. He has introduced legislation to authorize the Rural Housing and Economic Development (RHED) program in U.S. HUD providing funding of \$30 million in 2008 and \$40 million in FY 2009-2013. In addition he also requested a bill to authorize a \$10 million appropriation for the Housing Assistance Council for 2008 with \$15 million in FY 2009-2014. For more information, go to <http://hinojosa.house.gov/>.

## FUNDING AND FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES

**The U.S. Department of Labor is requesting applications for grants to operate the housing assistance portion of the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP).** In the first of the two-year program, \$74 million is available. **The deadline is May 29.** For more information, visit <http://www.doleta.gov/sga/sga.cfm>.

**The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is offering another grant cycle of its Hurricane Katrina Education Fund for grants of \$50,000.** It supports educational projects and organizations addressing the academic needs of children displaced by the hurricanes. In this round, BRAF will give

preference to organizations providing summer remediation and enrichment. The deadline is May 31. For more information, go to [www.braf.org](http://www.braf.org).

**The USDA has close to \$32 million available for section 514 Farm Labor Housing (FLH) loans and more than \$10 million for section 516 FLH grants.** Applications may also include requests for section 521 rental assistance (RA) and operating assistance for migrant apartments. **The deadline is June 18.** Go to <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20071800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/E7-7444.htm> for more information or contact a Rural Development state office.

**The Housing Assistance Council has Green Fund Capacity Grants of up to \$15,000 to promote the effective use of green building technologies for the development of affordable rural housing.** Selected grant recipients must use the awarded funds to support green building/healthy homes techniques and practices in their housing development activities. Supported by Home Depot, **applications are due July 15.** For information, visit [www.ruralhome.org/info/Announcements\\_GreenFund07.htm](http://www.ruralhome.org/info/Announcements_GreenFund07.htm).

**The Southeast Rural Community Assistance Projects, Inc., which covers all of the east coast states south of the Mason-Dixon Line, has created a new Individual Household Well Loan Program.** It is designed to assist those with low to moderate incomes with loans to construct, refurbish or service household wells. Contact Beth Pusha at 540 345-1184 Ext. 22 or [vwp@sercap.org](mailto:vwp@sercap.org) for more information.

**Bank of America has announced a no-fee mortgage plan for its account holders.** This means loans will not have fees for application, appraisal, credit, underwriting, processing, title insurance, title search, private mortgage insurance, flood certification or closing fees. Usually, these fees amount to three to five percent of the mortgage amount. For more information, visit <http://nofeemortgageplus.bankofamerica.com/#>.

**Washington Mutual (WaMu) has initiated a borrowers' assistance program to help WaMu homeowners with subprime mortgages stabilize finances and avoid foreclosure.** It will refinance up to \$2 billion subprime loans at discounted interest rates. The program will also provide counseling and education about loan options. Call 800 881-7099 for more information.

**The Rural Community Assistance Corporation accepting nominations for its 2008 Outstanding Rural Volunteer Award.** Nomination forms are available online at <http://www.rcac.org/doc.aspx?284>. The honoree will receive an award, a reception held in his/her community and \$4,000 to donate to a charitable organization in her/his community. **The deadline is October 19.**

## TRAINING EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

**There will be a meeting of the Manufactured Housing Consensus Committee on May 22 and 23 in Arlington, VA,** sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Housing (HUD). Topics will include safety standards, procedural and enforcement regulations, and the development of proposed model installation standards. Call (202) 708-6409 for more information.

# Stand Up for Rural America - Rural Community Developers Network Reporter

Volume 9, Number 9 May 15, 2007

**The National Rural Institute on Alcohol and Drug Abuse will be held June 3-7 at the University of Wisconsin in Menomonie.** Key resource persons from throughout the U. S. will present 12 hour in-depth tracks, 4 1/2 hour mini-workshops and 1 1/2 hour special topic sessions on current, innovative and emerging topics. Contact [conference-solutions@uwstout.edu](mailto:conference-solutions@uwstout.edu) for more information or call 715 232-2793.

**The Southern Rural Development Center will host E-Commerce Strategies for Small Businesses and Communities June 4-6 in Nebraska City.** For more information, contact Kathy Ibendahl, SRDC Business Manager at [kibendahl@srcd.msstate.edu](mailto:kibendahl@srcd.msstate.edu) or 662-325-3207 or visit <http://srcd.msstate.edu/ecommerce/07training/>.

**A Symposium on Small Towns, hosted by the Center for Small Towns and the University of Minnesota will be held June 5 & 6 in Morris, MN.** It is dedicated to creating awareness of small town issues and celebrating rural living. Visit [www.morris.umn.edu/services/cst/symposium/2007/index.htm](http://www.morris.umn.edu/services/cst/symposium/2007/index.htm) for more information.

## INFORMATION AND OTHER RESOURCES

**HUD is asking for ideas for changes to its manufactured home standards, procedures, and enforcement.** It will accept comments continuously. See Federal Register, 5/4/07, p. 25327 or call 202-708-6409.

**The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) has release its newly updated guide, Lending on Native American Lands: A Guide for Rural Development Staff.** It includes information on new USDA regulations and policies, as well as resources from other sources. To download, go to [www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/aian/](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/aian/).

**Blueprint for Greening Affordable Housing by Global Green Publications is available at [www.globalgreen.org/publications](http://www.globalgreen.org/publications).** The publication supports community-based affordable housing developers by demonstrating environmental building principles through case studies and makes recommendations for design, construction and operation.

Send information on funding opportunities, events, publications, resources or rural related policy issues to: [reporter@ruralamerica.org](mailto: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](mailto:info@ruralamerica.org).

