

STAND UP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

The first National Rural Assembly (NRA) took place last week, drawing some 400 participants for the two-and-a-half-day event. Underwritten by the W.K. Kellogg and Ford Foundations, it was sponsored by a dozen other organizations including *Stand Up*. It aimed at creating a national rural policy agenda and jump starting ongoing work to educate policy makers.

Program highlights included an opening address by Susan Berresford, Ford Foundation president, as well as reports on new rural survey and focus group results by the Carsey Institute (<http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/>) and Greenberg Quinlan Rosner (www.greenbergresearch.com/) and a pundits panel moderated by Bob Edwards.

The most moving part of the NRA was the presentation of the first half-dozen Hero awards to Bill Bynum, Enterprise Corporation of the Delta for his work securing investment in the Delta; Eloise Cobell, the Native American Community Development Corporation, for advocacy as the lead plaintiff in the federal suit to provide a half million people proper accounting and compensation for Indian trust accounts; Sharon King, the F.B. Heron Foundation, for her pioneering work in using all the financing tools at the foundation's disposal to fund grassroots rural groups; and Al Smith for his journalism coverage of rural communities and his creation of the Institute of Rural Journalism.

All of the presidential candidates were invited to address the group. Senator Hillary Clinton spoke via satellite, making real news when she answered an audience question by saying she thought changing USDA's name to the Department of Rural Affairs or Development was a dandy idea. See her remarks at www.dailyyonder.com. Senator Edwards and Representative Kucinich provided taped messages. The next NRA challenge is capturing the energy and enthusiasm generated at the conference to continue the work. [more to come].

POLICY UPDATE

U.S. Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), who chairs the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, held a Rural Summit, back-to-back with the National Rural Assembly, drawing 300 including members of Congress. Key witnesses testifying on rural development issues included Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius and Peter Carey, director of Self Help Enterprises, an accomplished California CDC. To see his remarks, go to http://www.house.gov/delauro/Rural_Summit/Main.html.

The Labor-HHS House Appropriations Subcommittee has marked up the FY 2008 Appropriations bill funding increases to Outreach and Network Grants, Rural Health Research, State Offices of Rural Health, the National Health Service Corps, Area Health Education Centers and Community Health Centers. The full Appropriations

Committee is expected to vote on the bill in early July, followed by a vote on the House floor.

In the Senate, a bipartisan, comprehensive rural health care bill was introduced June 26. Senators Conrad, Roberts, Harkin, Domenici and others introduced S. 1605. The Craig Thomas Rural Hospital and Provider Equity Act, honoring Senator Thomas who died recently and was a champion for rural health care, serving as a co-chair of the Rural Health Caucus.

FUNDING AND FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is accepting applications for up to 14 grants of \$200,000 to \$500,000.

The Local Initiative Funding Partners program involves collaboration between the foundation and local grantmakers providing funding to improve the health of vulnerable people.

The application deadline is July 10. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org/applications/solicited/cfp.jsp?ID=19831.

The USDA's Rural Housing Service is accepting applications for grants in its Technical and Supervisory Assistance (TSA) program.

Funds may be used to conduct programs of technical and supervisory assistance for low-income rural residents helping them obtain and/or maintain adequate housing. **The pre-application deadline is July 20.**

Go to www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/nofas/index.html for more information or contact Nica Mathes at 202 205-3656, nica.mathes@wdc.usda.gov.

The Staples Foundation for Learning awards grants of up to \$25,000 to provide educational opportunities and job skills, with a special emphasis on disadvantaged youth.

The foundation reviews grant proposals quarterly. For more information, visit www.staplesfoundation.org/foundhome.html.

Google invites applications for its Google Grants program providing nonprofits with free in-kind advertising using Google AdWords. Google Grant recipients use AdWords to raise awareness and increase traffic to their websites. Each award recipient receives at least three months of in-kind advertising. Applications are accepted every quarter. For more information, go to www.google.com/grants.

TRAINING EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

LISC Organizational Development Initiative will hold a webcast July 11, 2-3:30 pm EDT featuring a Board Self-Assessment Quiz. Mel Gill, president of Synergy Associates will conduct the session. Register at dpatrick@lisc.org. And on **July 25, 2-3:30 pm EDT, Partnerships Personified: Success of a 360-Degree Leader.** Learn how Vicki Johnson, Executive Director of Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation, successfully used her 360 degree leadership skills to build and leverage the powerful relationships that are bringing her neighborhood into a global marketplace. Register by emailing sslemp@lisc.org.

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INFORMATION AND OTHER RESOURCES

USDA's Economic Research Service has analyzed the current Farm Bill and the various proposals being debated in Congress as it prepares to reauthorize the bill later this year. It looks at the economic effects of current farm legislation on producers, consumers, taxpayers, and rural communities. It will continue to add to the information as the issues emerge. Go to <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Features/FarmBill2007>.

"Improving the odds: The Challenging Business of Managing Affordable Housing," Property Compliance Report, June 2007. Contact Judy Turnock at jturnock@lisc.org for a copy.

The South Carolina Rural Health Research Center has released a study showing rates of child obesity are climbing in several states, including Pennsylvania, New

Mexico, Michigan, West Virginia, and North Carolina. It examines overweight and obesity among children in both rural and urban settings using the data the 2003 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH). In 2003, 30.6% of children aged 10-17 years old were overweight; 14.8% of these children were obese. Rural children (16.5%) were more likely to be obese than urban children (14.4%). To download the executive summary, go to www.ruralhealthresearch.org/centers/southcarolina/publications_date.php.

The latest issue of Choices magazine from the American Agricultural Economics Association contains four articles discussing the impact of immigration on the U.S. farm sector. It discusses the impact of legal and illegal immigration on farm labor supply, wage rates, agricultural production and rural communities. Go to www.choicesmagazine.org.

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.

