

STAND UP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

RURAL DEVELOPMENT TITLE OF THE FARM BILL NEEDS OUR SUPPORT, YOUR SUPPORT!!! JUST SAY YES NOW PLEASE!!!

Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), chairman of the Agriculture Committee and lifelong Rural Development champion, needs our help. He leads the Senate's Farm Bill action. He has sent an urgent heads-up that neither he nor his Senate colleagues are hearing much from Rural Development supporters. He warns that if Senators don't hear right now, vital Rural Development programs and resources will be lost. What's at stake?

- * About \$2 billion he's proposing in mandatory funding plus additional discretionary funding;
- * Expanded water and sewer and Community Facilities (CF) programs and resources, including new CF monies focused on child and health care;
- * All the existing business and economic development programs, including a new microenterprise initiative.

WHY IMMEDIATE ACTION IS NEEDED:

The House just passed its version of the Farm Bill. The Senate must act by early September because the current law expires September 31st.

We're not asking you to take sides on any controversies or endorse specific programs. We're simply asking you to sign on to a letter supporting Rural Development. Signing this letter does not prevent you from signing others. To sign on, go to www.ruralamerica.org or fax 202-785-8030. TIME IS RUNNING OUT! IF WE DON'T STAND UP FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT, WHO WILL? PLEASE SIGN NOW!

POLICY UPDATE

The Community Restoration and Revitalization Act (HR 1043, S. 584) would create new investment incentives for affordable housing and commercial development using historic buildings. Sponsored by Reps. Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-OH) and Phil English (R-PA) and Sens. Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) and Gordon Smith (R-OR), this bill is designed to make the Historic Preservation Tax Credit easier to use, especially in developments combining it with the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and for smaller, more "main street" type plans. Go to <http://thomas.loc.gov> to see the full text of the House and Senate bills and track their progress.

Senators Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and Arlen Specter (R-PA) have co-sponsored the Rural Students College, Career and Community Readiness Act of 2007. It would establish partnerships between nonprofits and school districts encouraging students to stay in school and prepare for community leadership positions. Studies have shown many rural students have lower educational goals and job achievement than their urban and suburban peers. Go to <http://thomas.loc.gov> for more information about S. 1787.

The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) has published "Foreclosure Prevention: Improving Contact with Borrowers," a report on the best practices loan servicers are using to improve contacts with delinquent borrowers. "Effective foreclosure prevention strategies rely on increasing the amount of contact between loan servicers and delinquent borrowers," said Barry Wides, OCC's Deputy Comptroller of Community Affairs. The report is available at <http://www.occ.gov>

The federal financial regulatory agencies have issued a final Statement on Subprime Mortgage Lending. It describes consumer protection standards institutions should follow to insure borrowers get loans they can afford to repay. Visit <http://www.occ.treas.gov/ftp/release/2007-64a.pdf> to read the report.

FUNDING AND FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES

The Blue Shield of California Foundation is accepting applications for grants in one of three program areas: expanding access to healthcare and coverage, promoting the use of medical technology to increase the quality of patient care, and ending domestic violence. Grants range in size from \$1,000 to over \$1 million, the average size is about \$55,000. Letters of Inquiry are accepted on a rolling basis, and funding decisions are made four times a year. **The next deadline is August 24.** Visit <http://blueshieldcafoundation.org/>.

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta has opened Round II of its Affordable Housing Program (AHP). The application is available on FHLBAccess, the bank's internet service portal. **The deadline is September 17.** For more information, visit www.fhlbatl.com.

TRAINING EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

The National Center on Nonprofit Enterprise will hold a conference "Your Money or Your Mission," September 26-29 in Arlington, Virginia. It will explore how nonprofits can be sustainable while remaining true to the mission for which they were created. For more information, visit www.nationalcne.org.

The Youth Microenterprise Conference, sponsored by Making Cents International will be held in Washington, D.C. on September 10-11. For more information, go to <http://ymeconference.org/registration.asp>.

The National Association of Seed and Venture Funds (NASVF) Annual Conference will be held on September 17-19 in Little Rock, Arkansas. For more information, go to www.nasvf.org.

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INFORMATION AND OTHER RESOURCES

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has expanded its Rural People, Rural Policy Initiative by funding 32 more organizations in its second year. These participants join 24 groups already engaged in the multi-year project designed to improve conditions for rural communities. The initiative, designed to give a voice to advocates for rural policy changes through a new, network-driven approach. Go to http://www.msdi.org/news/detail.asp?NewsID=423&nid=<!--news_id--> to see the complete list of participants.

PolicyLink has issued a report showing nearly 60 percent of Louisiana renters displaced by hurricanes Katrina and Rita are unable to return because they can't find affordable rental housing. According to the authors, more than 82,000 apartments were damaged or destroyed by the storms, but only 33,000 affordable rentals are on track to be rebuilt. "Bringing Louisiana Renters Home: An Evaluation of the 2006-2007 Gulf Opportunity Zone Rental Housing Restoration Program," is available at www.policylink.org/documents/LRHC.pdf.

The Western Rural Development Center's recent newsletter, Rural Connections, focuses on Arts-Based

Community Development and Sustainable Community Development. It's available online at http://extension.usu.edu/wrdc/Files/pdf/Rural%20Connections%20-%20Newsletter/rural_connections_april_2007.pdf.

The Journal of Regional Policy Analysis has published a special issue on State Rural Development Policy by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It's available online at <http://www.jrap-journal.org/pastvolumes/2000/v37/index371.html>.

Too many rural communities believe that technological innovation is something that happens only in major urban areas or large research universities. A new study from Kansas City Federal Reserve researcher Jason Henderson argues that rural communities need to focus more on technology adoption strategies. "Rural places are adept at technological adoption, a kind of innovation that improves existing technologies." View the article "The Power of Technological Innovation in Rural America," at www.kansascityfed.org/RegionalAffairs/Mainstreet/MSE_0707.pdf in the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City's Main Street Economist newsletter.

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.

