



Stand Up for Rural America

Rural Community Developers Network Reporter

September 1, 2008

Stand Up Update

Starting in this issue, Stand Up for Rural America will feature occasional independent opinions from leaders in fields related to helping rural community developers like your group gain the resources and policy support their work deserves. First up is a column from Rick Cohen, former director of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, member of the Stand Up Steering committee, columnist for The Nonprofit Quarterly and publisher of The Cohen Report, watch dogging philanthropy. Check it out at <http://www.nonprofitquarterly.org/cohenreport/>.

The Baucus Challenge: Philanthropy's Tepid Response

Not much has happened since Montana Senator Max Baucus challenged U.S. foundations to double their rural giving. The trade association, the Council on Foundations, organized a rural philanthropy summit and published a book of essays. The public can buy it for \$29.95; foundations get a 10 percent discount. That sort of says it all.

Senator Baucus, we're still waiting for a meaningful foundation response to your challenges. Their main message to rural America still is "Pick yourselves up by your bootstraps." Rather than focus more of their \$43 billion in annual grants on rural people, challenges and opportunities, many are advising rural communities to home-grow their own philanthropies. What's worse, the Ford and W.K. Kellogg Foundations are changing their priorities, downsizing rural support. In recent years, these two accounted for 40 percent of all rural giving nationwide.

In short, foundation myopia continues. So does the consistent, structural shortfall in rural giving. It seems that, except for meetings, studies and PR, national foundations are paying little attention to Senator Baucus' challenge, with little evidence of

substantially increased rural grantmaking. Unless more pressure is brought to bear by Congress and rural nonprofits, the rural funding gap is destined to grow.

For more details and documentation on this gap, go to http://www.ruralisc.org/seminar_materials/2008/philanthropy/Rick%20Cohen%20Speech.pdf for Rick Cohen's remarks delivered in conjunction with the fifth national Stand Up Day held in June.

Policy Update

Despite veto threats, President Bush signed the Housing and Economic Recovery Act. Key components of the bill include: the Fannie Mae and Freddie MAC bail out; nearly \$4 billion for states and localities to acquire foreclosed properties; and the most significant modernization of Low Income Housing Tax Credits since 1989. The changes apply mostly to apartments that are placed in service after July 30, 2008. It also creates more tax-exempt projects. U.S. HUD is working to get the \$4 billion on the street ASAP. It isn't clear whether the regulations will contain provisions making it possible for rural communities to benefit. For a more complete look at this housing credit modernization, go to <http://www.lisc.org/content/article/detail/7396>.

Funding and Financing Opportunities

The Louisiana Road Home Program is extending the deadline to November 1, 2008 for applicants who have not decided whether they will rebuild or sell their homes and have not returned necessary documents or provided proof of occupancy. The old deadline was September 5. A homeowner has three options under the Road Home Program, but grant awards will be larger for those who choose to stay in Louisiana.

- Option 1 - Stay and rebuild.
- Option 2 - Sell to the state and purchase a new home in Louisiana.
- Option 3 - Sell their home to the state and purchase a new home elsewhere.

For more information, go to http://www.road2la.org/news_releases/deadlineLifted_082708.htm.

The NOFA for FY 2009 Round of CDFI funding is now available on the CDFI website. The deadline for submitting this application is **October 29, 2008**. For the full announcement and application, visit

http://www.cdfifund.gov/what_we_do/programs_id.asp?programID=7#2.

The Kresge Foundation's Green Building Initiative awards planning grants for sustainable design. The awards range from \$50,000 - \$100,000 for organization that are undertaking projects in: renovation; historic preservation; new construction aimed at LEED certification and similar green construction. For more information and an application, go to <http://www.kresge.org/content/displaycontent.aspx?CID=59>.

Training Events and Conferences

The Housing Finance Institute is coming to Washington, DC from September 9th to the 11th. The institute covers such topics as; loan origination and underwriting, investor accounting, and delinquency and foreclosure prevention. Industry experts will be on hand to discuss real life case studies. For more information and registration, go to <https://www.efanniemae.com/lc/hfi/index.jsp>.

The next Rural Philanthropy conference, hosted by the Nebraska Community Foundation, will be from September 10-12 in Nebraska City. The training will focus on grassroots models of rural philanthropy that have been used across the U.S. Participants will develop take-home tools to use in their own communities. For more information about the conference, contact Sheri Hink, shink@nebcommfound.org, call 402-323-7347, or visit <http://www.nebcommfound.org/RPC/2008RPC.htm>.

Information and Other Resources

The Economic Research Service at USDA has compiled a side-by-side comparison of the last two Farm Bills, summarizing and comparing each title. It offers a brief summary of key provisions, and also provides a time-saving reference to the bill. Go to <http://www.ers.usda.gov/FarmBill/2008/> to read the report.

The Pew Partnership for America's Economic Success has released "The Hidden Costs of the Housing Crisis: The Impact of Housing on Young Children's Odds of Success." The report finds that, while all children are negatively affected by the loss of stable and affordable housing, children under 5 are the most vulnerable. Without a stable home, children find it more difficult to learn, which means this particular housing crisis could have reverberations for society for years to come. To read the report, go to http://www.partnershipforsuccess.org/docs/research_brief_200807_housing.pdf.

The deadline for submitting nominations for the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Awards for Architectural Excellence in Community Design is September 18th. The award winning design will: demonstrate superior design quality with regard to the neighborhood context; successfully respond to the needs of the population; enhance the overall development of the local community and work as a potential model for other neighborhoods. For more information, go to <http://www.lisc-cnda.org/display.aspx?pointer=3773> or call 312-385-4803.

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.

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