



Stand Up for Rural America –

Rural Community Developers Network Reporter-

Pennsylvania Supplement

April 19, 2005

Policy Update

- **There are several items of interest in the 2005-6 budget proposed by Governor Rendell.**
 - **Housing** – While the Department of Community Economic Development received all of the \$30 million it requested for the Housing and Redevelopment Assistance Program, other programs were not as fortunate. The New Communities program received \$18 million this year, \$1 million less than last year's allocation. And the Pennsylvania Housing and Finance Authority (PHFA) received only \$5 million of a requested \$23 million for its programs.

- **Growing Greener II Initiative** – The Governor has asked for an \$800 million bond issue for this initiative, \$170 million of which would be for the revitalization of older communities.
- **Neighborhood Assistance Program** - The Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) grants tax credits to corporations that contribute to eligible charitable activities, including the development of affordable housing. Unfortunately, several million dollars worth of credits go unused each year. There is a push to amend NAP to increase its utilization, including establishing priorities for the 70% credit and increasing or removing the limit on how many credits any one corporation can receive.
- This information came from the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania; more information is available at www.housingalliancepa.org.

Funding Opportunities

- **The Center for Rural Pennsylvania Mini Grants** are awarded to projects that focus on basic data collection and analysis, time-sensitive issues, and/or the preparation of reference materials. Projects sponsored as Mini Grants are a maximum of nine months in duration and are eligible for a maximum of \$10,000 in Center support. All projects must show a clear relationship to one or more of the Center's mandated research areas, which are rural people and communities; economic development; local government finance and administration; community services; natural resources and the environment; rural values and social change; and educational outreach. **THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF LETTERS OF INTENT IS APRIL 25, 2005.** For application

procedures for proposed open Mini Grant projects go to their website at

<http://www.ruralpa.org/rfp.html#top>.

- **2005 Agriculture in the Classroom course applications due April 30.** The Agriculture Awareness Foundation of Pennsylvania is accepting applications for its 2005 Agriculture in the Classroom course being held July 17 to 22, 2005 at Penn State University. Qualified teachers may be eligible to receive a \$600 sponsorship from the agricultural community to attend the course. For an application, contact the foundation, c/o PennAg Industries Association, 2215 Forest Hills Dr., Suite 39, Harrisburg, PA 17112-0099, email: pennag@pennag.com or visit www.pennag.com.
- **DEPT OF AGRICULTURE KICKS OFF PA GROWS INITIATIVE.** The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture announced its new PA Grows initiative to assist agricultural producers in gaining access to the capital they need to begin, continue or expand their businesses. By calling the toll-free number (888) 724-7697 or visiting www.pagrows.com, producers can get information on SBA and USDA programs, requirements for the new PA First Industries Fund; appropriate partners among local and regional economic development organizations; and private lenders to work in accessing the PA Small Business First and Machinery and Equipment Loan Fund programs.
- **FEDERAL HOME LOAN BANK OF PITTSBURGH OFFERS REVITALIZATION TRAINING TO PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITIES: REFERRALS DUE BY APRIL 28TH.** The Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh (FHLBank), in cooperation with multiple partners, is launching the training component of a revitalization initiative for 20 rural and urban communities. Called Blueprint Communities, it will serve as a catalyst for creating sustainable

communities in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and West Virginia. The training component involves multiple workshop sessions and fieldwork. In 2005, 16 to 20 neighborhoods/communities are expected to participate in the training with a five-person team from each locale. Participant communities will be selected by the FHLBank.

FHLBank is accepting community referrals for the training program until April 28.

To make a referral or for more information, including eligibility requirements, visit the FHLBank website at www.fhlb-pgh.com/blueprintcommunities.html, call the FHLBank's Community Investment Department at (412) 288-2826 or e-mail blueprint@fhlb-pgh.com.

Training Events and Conferences

- **Asset-Based Development Conference April 25-26.** Sponsored by the PA Department of Community & Economic Development at the Blair County Convention Center in Altoona, PA. For more information call (814) 949-6522 or go online to: www.sapdc.org.
- **Federal Reserve Banks of Philadelphia and Cleveland offer Small-Business and Economic-Development Lending Opportunities in Pennsylvania, a seminar coming up on April 26 at Williamsport, on May 2 at Pittsburgh, on May 3 at Erie, on June at Wilkes-Barre, and on June 14 at Philadelphia.** This seminar is designed for lenders, CRA officers, and local economic-development organizations. The curriculum will cover Pennsylvania, SBA, and USDA Rural Development programs. In addition, Banking Secretary Bill Schenck will discuss initiatives being pursued by the

Pennsylvania Department of Banking, and a Federal Reserve Bank economist will present a regional economic outlook. Detailed agendas for the individual meetings are posted at: www.philadelphiafed.org/cca/conferences.html. The registration fee is \$15 per person and includes continental breakfast and lunch. For more information, contact Yvette Cooper at (215) 574-6037 or email yvette.cooper@phil.frb.org.

- **"How to be a Local Hero - Development Decisions for Stronger Communities" - Thursday, April 28, 2005 from 3:00 - 8:30p.m. in Valley Forge.** A new seminar for developers and local leaders. *Full scholarships are available for those who are interested.* For more information, contact info@housingalliancepa.org.
- **How to Request Online for PENNVEST Funding by PENNVEST.** At different locations throughout PA on May 3 in Meadville and May 4 in Scranton. Call (717) 787-8138 or email lbuffingto@state.pa.us for more information.
- **Rural Poverty in the Northeast: Strengthening the Regional Research Effort on May 3-4.** This event is sponsored by the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development at the Days Inn Penn State in State College. For more information please call (814) 863-4656 or go to www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu.
- **Rural Issues Forum: This seminar will be offered at several locations; on May 4 at Williamsport, on May 18 in Tannersville, and on June 1 in Bradford.** These forums are being presented by The Pennsylvania Rural Development Council and multiple co-sponsors. Local citizens can discuss issues of most importance to themselves and their communities with representatives from government agencies and statewide organizations. Topics to be

discussed include: community development, health care, economic development, education and infrastructure. Senior representatives from state agencies will be on hand to outline several Rendell Administration initiatives. Input gained at the forums will be included in the Pennsylvania Rural Development Council Strategic Plan and presented to the Governor. For more information call (717) 772-9030 or go online to www.ruralpa.state.pa.us.

- **Writing Grants and Getting Them Funded: May 11 in Clarion and May 12 in Washington.** These events are sponsored by the PA State Association of Boroughs. For more information call (717) 236-9526 or go online www.boroughs.org/training.
- **Advancing Regional Equity and Smart Growth: The Second National Summit; May 23-25, 2005, Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia, PA.** The summit, sponsored by PolicyLink and the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, will feature more than 40 workshops exploring innovative strategies, policies, alliances, and coalitions advancing regional equity at the local, state, and national levels. To register, go to [PolicyLink's web site](#) or call PolicyLink at (510) 663-2333.
- **June 6-8 is the Penn State Center Annual Dirt & Gravel Roads Maintenance Workshop** at Wilson College in Chambersburg. For more information call (814) 865-5355 or email: dirtandgravel@psu.edu.
- **June 7-9 is the Pennsylvania Rural Health Conference** sponsored by the Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Harrisburg. For more information call (814) 863-8214 or go to <http://porh.cas.psu.edu>.

- **June 20-24 is the Landis Valley Associates' Institute of Pennsylvania Rural Life and Culture** at the Landis Valley Museum in Lancaster. For more information call (717) 569-0401 or log onto their website at www.landisvalleymuseum.org.
- **PENN STATE TO HOLD WATER-QUALITY WEB TOOL WORKSHOPS.** Penn State University's Department of Meteorology, the Penn State Cooperative Extension and the Department of Environmental Protection, are holding a series of training workshops on a new web tool, called Stream Health and Runoff Potential (SHRP), which can be used to estimate stream health, such as yearly nutrient yields, for any user-selected stream basin or watershed. Workshops are open to anyone interested in water quality and storm water runoff. Lunch will be provided. There is no charge for individuals from non-profit organizations or those affiliated with the Penn State Outreach program. Training is available from May 2 through 17, excluding weekends. For registration materials or more information, call (814) 865-1582, or e-mail tnc@essc.psu.edu.