



News Release

Release: Immediate

Contact:

Molly Hammond, (217) 403-6203

molly.hammond@il.usda.gov

Darin Leach, (515) 284-4747

darin.leach@ia.usda.gov

Greg Batson (573) 876-9304

gregory.batson@mo.usda.gov

Tri-State Development Summit Designated a USDA Great Region

QUINCY, IL, November 21, 2013 – Today, USDA - Rural Development State Directors from Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa announced the designation of the Tri-State Development Summit as a Great Region. Ms. Colleen Callahan (Illinois), Ms. Janie Dunning (Missouri) and Mr. Bill Menner (Iowa) were present to congratulate and recognize the Tri-State Development Summit.

Great Regions is a priority of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. Secretary Vilsack has stressed the importance of a regional approach to creating economic opportunity and job creation in rural communities. USDA supports rural communities that work together on a multi-county or regional basis, with a focus on the development and implementation of ground-level economic development plans.

“Our goal is to work collaboratively with our partners throughout the Great Region,” Callahan said. “When we work together, we are more likely to serve more people and bridge any gaps in the availability of resources.”

“We understand the resources of small, rural communities are often insufficient to meet demands when approached on an individual basis. But, when communities join together working for common goals, great things can happen,” Dunning said. “By taking a regional approach to solving problems, communities can combine assets, expertise and knowledge to respond to challenges. The Tri-State Development Summit has long recognized and worked to accomplish the task of assessing regional needs and identifying resources to meet those needs. Great Regions will be another tool at their disposal.”

“Our mission at USDA Rural Development is to help build competitive and sustainable small towns and rural communities,” Menner added. “One way to do this is to assist them as they explore opportunities to gain greater economic strength and longevity through collaboration with neighboring communities and regional economic hubs.”

By designating the Tri-State Development Summit as a Great Region, Illinois, Iowa and Missouri Rural Development commit support through at least Fiscal Year 2015. The support

may include training, technical support, actions to foster intra-regional collaboration, project funding for plan implementation and other support deemed useful.

“We are honored to receive this designation that recognizes the work of our 35-county Tri-State Summit region over the past 17 years. We look forward to working more closely with USDA Rural Development to advance the Summit’s mission of bringing together area leaders to define common issues, developing on-going dialogues to address those issues and improving the quality of life through economic development activities,” said Tri-State Summit Steering Committee Member Chuck Scholz.

“The Tri-State Housing Committee, a standing committee of the Tri-State Development Summit, is proud to have worked with USDA Rural Development to bring this designation to the Tri-State area,” said Carla Potts, a housing committee member who spearheaded the project with USDA. “We are already working on several programs that could have a regional and a national impact and we look forward to enhancing partnerships to increase economic development in the area.”

To be designated, a region must have an economic development plan in place, in process or be willing to prepare an economic development plan. In addition, the region must demonstrate an interest in increasing collaboration across counties and institutions. An economic development plan is generated by a local team with broad participation, built upon careful analysis of the region’s assets and includes key current and emerging economic clusters.

USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, has a portfolio of programs designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America.

For examples of USDA investments in rural communities, please visit Rural Development’s interactive web map at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RDSuccessStories.html>. The map features program funding and success stories for fiscal years 2009-2012.

Today’s announcement is another reminder of the importance of USDA programs for rural America. Secretary Vilsack stresses that a comprehensive new Food, Farm and Jobs Bill would further expand the rural economy. He said that’s just one reason why Congress must get a comprehensive Food, Farm and Jobs Bill done as soon as possible.

President Obama’s plan for rural America has brought about historic investment and resulted in stronger rural communities. Under the President’s leadership, these investments in housing, community facilities, businesses and infrastructure have empowered rural America to continue leading the way – strengthening America’s economy, small towns and rural communities. USDA’s investments in rural communities support the rural way of life that stands as the backbone of our American values. President Obama and Agriculture Secretary Vilsack are committed to a smarter use of Federal resources to foster sustainable economic prosperity and ensure the government is a strong partner for businesses, entrepreneurs and working families in rural communities.

#

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).