

Two Applicants Selected for “Stronger Economies Together” Program (Provides Technical Assistance for Rural Regional Development)

Olympia, WA. August 18, 2011 – USDA Rural Development, in conjunction with Washington State University Extension, The Association of Washington Cities, The Washington State Association of Counties, and The Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other state and local partners, has selected two rural multi-county regions in Washington (including one which incorporates counties in Oregon) to be included in a program called “Stronger Economies Together” (SET). The two selected regional teams are Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, encompassing Klickitat, and Skamania counties in Washington, and Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties in Oregon, and Tri County Economic Development District, encompassing Ferry, Stevens, and Pend Oreille counties, all in Washington state. These two teams were selected from a total of three applications that were received on May 13, 2011.

SET is a program designed to help regional teams develop new approaches to strengthen and enhance regional economic development activities. The SET program is an opportunity for current and newly formed multi-county teams to receive the latest tools, training, and technical assistance to help their region move forward and take advantage of positive growth and quality of life opportunities.

The selected applicants will receive the following: 1) Valuable intensive strategic planning training for their regional team, including the newly developed “Stronger Economies Together” program, a program designed to help your regional team develop new approaches to strengthen and enhance regional economic development activities; 2) Database tools specifically designed to help the regional teams examine the critical drivers of their region and identify emerging growth sectors and regional competitive advantages; 3) Technical assistance and educational support from the Western Rural Development Center, Rural Development staff and Washington State University Extension staff; and 4) Other educational and information-sharing opportunities with other SET program participants around the country.

USDA Rural Development serves as the lead federal agency for rural development needs by offering financial and technical assistance to individuals, businesses and communities. USDA Rural Development programs include funding for day care centers, fire trucks and other community facility projects; purchase, construction of new homes; loans and guarantees to rural businesses to save or create jobs and renewable energy; and loans and grants for water and sewer utility projects. For more information on programs offered by USDA Rural Development, contact the Washington State Office at (360) 704-7740 or visit our website at www.rurdev.usda.gov/wa.