



United States Department of Agriculture  
Rural Development



South Dakota State University  
Extension

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Contact:

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**South Dakota USDA Rural Development and SDSU Extension Announce Rural Economic Development Training Opportunity**

Pierre, SD - March, 26, 2012 – Applications are now being accepted for a new “Stronger Economies Together (SET)” Program to provide training and technical assistance for rural regional economic development. Application deadline is May 4, 2012.

USDA Rural Development (USDA RD) and South Dakota State University (SDSU) Extension are collaborating for this initiative. It will strengthen the capacity of rural communities and counties to work together in developing and implementing economic development blueprints that strategically build on the current and emerging economic strengths of the region. The SET Program is sponsored by USDA RD and the nation’s four Regional Rural Development Centers.

Two regions in South Dakota will be awarded the opportunity to receive training and technical assistance delivered by a core team of Extension and RD staff. Topics include building a strong regional team; developing vision and goals; examining regional demographics, opportunities, and assets and barriers; and creating a regional economic development plan.

“We are very excited that South Dakota was chosen to participate in the SET program,” said USDA RD State Director Elsie M. Meeks, “Staff from SDSU, the State of South Dakota Governor’s Office of Economic Development, private business, a planning district and nonprofits makes up a State Partner Team to provide guidance and select the regions.”

Goals for the training are: (1) Guide the formation of strong, inclusive and effective teams; (2) Help teams discover the economic assets and strengths of their region; (3) Build strong working ties between USDA RD and Extension Service staff; and (4) Promote the development of a high quality, viable economic development blueprint for the region.

For questions, additional information or applications contact Christine Sorensen, USDA RD Coordinator at [christine.sorensen@sd.usda.gov](mailto:christine.sorensen@sd.usda.gov) or 605-224-8870 Ext. 123 or 605-530-5353. A complete application must be sent electronically to Christine no later than May 4, 2012 (11:59 pm Central).

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