

**Applications Available for “Stronger Economies Together” Program  
(Provides Technical Assistance for Rural Regional Development)**

*Applications Available online at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ky>, deadline is May 3, 2010*

LEXINGTON, Ky., April 1, 2010 - USDA Rural Development, in conjunction with the Southern Rural Development Center, and other state and local partners, has released details of a program called “Stronger Economies Together” (SET), which is designed to help regional teams develop new approaches to strengthen and enhance regional economic development activities. The SET program is an opportunity for current or 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. Two multi-county areas in rural Kentucky will be chosen to participate in the program.

The SET program eligibility requirements are: 1) Applicants must be multi-county regions (at least two or more counties) in Kentucky (or in conjunction with counties in neighboring states) where the average rural population is 51 percent or more of the region’s total population based on Census data or other sufficient data or documentation OR 2) Applicants must be multi-county regions (at least two or more counties) in Kentucky (or in conjunction with counties in neighboring states) where 75 percent of the region's land area is located in rural areas of that region based on Census data or other sufficient data or documentation.

Applications for the SET program are now available at Kentucky’s Rural Development Web site at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/ky](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ky). A complete application must be submitted electronically to [thomas.fern@ky.usda.gov](mailto:thomas.fern@ky.usda.gov) and [clay.mcknight@ky.usda.gov](mailto:clay.mcknight@ky.usda.gov) by May 3, 2010 (11:59 pm Eastern). An acknowledgment of receipt of application will be sent within 36 hours. The two applicants that are selected will be announced by June 8, 2010. There is no application fee, but chosen applicants should be prepared to supply some minor logistical support.

The successful 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 Southern Rural Development Center, Rural Development staff, and University of Kentucky Extension staff; and 4) Other educational and information-sharing opportunities with other SET program participants around the country.

If you have questions, contact:

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- Bo Beaulieu, Director and Professor, Southern Rural Development Center, 662-325-3207, [ljb@srcd.msstate.edu](mailto:ljb@srcd.msstate.edu)

USDA Rural Development administers and manages more than 40 housing, business, and community infrastructure and facility programs through a network of 6,100 employees located in 500 national, state and local offices. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of more than \$130 billion in loans and loan guarantees. For more information on programs offered by USDA Rural Development, contact the Kentucky State Office at (859) 224-7300 or visit its Web site at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/ky](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ky).