



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development  
World Wide Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>  
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## Application Now Available for NM Community Development Assistance *Joint USDA/NMSU/State EDD Initiative Will Offer Planning and Training*

(March 23, 2010 Albuquerque, NM) USDA Rural Development State Director Terry Brunner and Dr. Michael Patrick, of New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service and New Mexico economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Fred Mondragón announced today that New Mexico communities may apply for assistance through the Stronger Economies Together (SET) program which will provide training and technical assistance to rural communities seeking to strengthen their regional development efforts.

The program is designed to help interested counties to work together to develop and implement a regional economic development strategy or plan. The SET program project is a collaborative initiative between the Western Regional Rural Development Center at Utah State University, USDA Rural Development, New Mexico State University (NMSU) and the New Mexico State Economic Development Department.

In making the announcement Brunner said, “We have found that communities that work together to solve common economic development issues are more successful and sustainable. We believe this collaborative opportunity will help selected rural communities develop strategies to meet the economic challenges facing our state and our country.

Dr. Patrick of NMSU added, “The SET program provides New Mexico’s rural counties and communities with a unique opportunity to grow their economies through regional partnerships.”

New Mexico Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Fred Mondragón said, “The creation of rural jobs has been a priority of the Economic Development Department, so we are excited to partner in this program that will help provide a valuable tool for community growth.”

The two regional New Mexico communities selected to participate in the SET program will receive a number of important benefits including:

- Twenty-hours of valuable training on the SET program and guidance on ways to strengthen and enhance regional economic development activities.

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- Key data tailored to each region will be provided to help the regional team examine the critical drive of its economy and emerging economic sectors that may determine if that particular region might hold a comparative edge in the domestic and/or the international marketplace.
- Tools that can help uncover the variety of assets and resources that exists in that region that can contribute to the region's economic activities.
- Technical assistance and educational support from NMSU Extension educators, RD staff, and appropriate Regional Rural Development Centers for the one-year period of the project.
- Webinars with the other 15 selected regions in the U.S., thus enabling the sharing of information and gathering of ideas from other rural communities across the country.
- The value of these benefits will be in excess of \$15,000 per region.

Applications are due electronically no later than May 3, 2010 (by 11:59 pm Central Time) to [rd.comments@nm.usda.gov](mailto:rd.comments@nm.usda.gov) . Site visits will be scheduled with the strongest applicants by mid-May. Final decisions on the two regions in New Mexico to be part of the SET initiative will be announced by June 8, 2010.

All applications will be carefully reviewed by the SET State Partner Team. The team is composed of representatives of the New Mexico USDA RD, NMSU Cooperative Extension Service, and other key economic development organizations or agencies in the state. National USDA RD office and Regional Rural Development Center personnel will also provide input.

If you have any questions about the application process, please contact any one of the following individuals:

- Terry Brunner, New Mexico State Director, USDA-RD at [terry.brunner@nm.usda.gov](mailto:terry.brunner@nm.usda.gov)
- Michael Patrick, Community Resource and Economic Development Specialist, New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service at [jmpat@nmsu.edu](mailto:jmpat@nmsu.edu)

Or if you wish to request an application you can make your request by writing to: [rd.comments@nm.usda.gov](mailto:rd.comments@nm.usda.gov)

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