



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development  
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## Two Rural New Mexico Communities Awarded Federal Assistance for Community/Economic Development Training *Program Will Provide Economic Development Assistance For Rural Communities*

(July 2, 2010 Albuquerque, NM) USDA Rural Development State Director Terry Brunner and Dr. Michael Patrick, of New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service announced today announced the North Central NM Economic Development District and the Southwest New Mexico Economic Development Partnership have been chosen to participate in the Stronger Economies Together (SET) program. The SET program will provide the regions with assistance with their community and economic development planning.

The program was created to help encourage rural 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, New Mexico State University (NMSU) and USDA Rural Development. The New Mexico State Economic Development Department will also assist with the project.

In making the announcement Brunner said, “The two regions that were selected demonstrated that the need existed for developing strategies to meet the economic challenges facing their area of the state. As well, this program will provide intensive training to community leaders over the course of a year. These two regions are prepared to put in the necessary time and effort which says a lot about their commitment to their community.

Dr. Patrick of NMSU added, “The success that the two regions have in effectively utilizing the technical assistance provided under the SET program will pave the way for future resources and assistance becoming available to other rural development organizations in New Mexico”.

The North Central NM Economic Development District based in Santa Fe will use the training to target communities in Colfax, Mora, and San Miguel counties. The district will focus on stabilizing and improving existing business, building a workforce for community improvement and developing the existing business/industrial clusters in intermodal transportation, small timber industries, alternative energy, and medical manufacturing.

The Southwest New Mexico Economic Development Partnership is made up of various entities organizations in Grant and Luna Counties. They plan to create sustainable local

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economies by helping current businesses develop and grow. To do so they plan to create an awareness of the benefits in 'shopping local' and they will look at the possibility of creating business incubators to help foster new business growth. They also plan to take advantage of alternative energy production to create a better economy in the region.

The two regional New Mexico communities selected will receive training and guidance on ways to strengthen and enhance regional economic development activities. Key information tailored to each region will be provided to help 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. The technical assistance and educational support for the two regions will come from NMSU Extension educators, RD staff, and appropriate Regional Rural Development Centers for the one-year period of the project.

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