



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
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Two Applicants Selected for “Stronger Economies Together” Program (Provides Technical Assistance for Rural Regional Development)

Harrisburg, July 7, 2010 - USDA Rural Development, in conjunction with The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, the Governor's Advisory Council on Rural Affairs, Penn State Cooperative Extension, and other state and local partners, has selected two rural multi-county regions in Pennsylvania to be included in a program called “Stronger Economies Together” (SET). The two selected regional teams are Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission, encompassing the counties of Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming, and Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, encompassing the counties of Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango and Warren. These two teams were selected from a total of eleven applications received by the May 3, 2010 deadline.

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 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.

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 Northeast Regional Rural Development Center, Rural Development staff, and Penn 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; the purchase, construction or repair of 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 Pennsylvania State Office at (717) 237-2299 or visit its website at www.rurdev.usda.gov/pa.

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