



08-17-09

USDA launches new Rural Tour website at www.RuralTour.gov

By Agri-Pulse Staff

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture launched a new interactive website Monday focused on issues facing rural America as part of the Obama administration's Rural Tour. This week, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack will lead Rural Tour Community Forums in Hamlet, NC, Des Moines, IA, and Sedalia, MO, bringing the total number of Rural Tour stops to 16. The many new features on www.RuralTour.gov will enable Americans across the country to share stories, provide feedback, and get information on the tour.

"The goal of Obama administration's Rural Tour is to reach out to people in rural communities to listen, learn, and address the issues facing rural Americans," Vilsack said. "The website launched today will be an important part of achieving these goals by providing the tools for people across the country to be a part of the conversations beyond tour stops." The Rural Tour site features several new features. First, all Americans are invited to "Join the Conversation," where they can share their own stories, even if they are unable to make it to one of the rural tour forums personally. Second, information about upcoming events and reports from past forums are easily available. Finally, the site includes a "What's Working" section where people can share Recovery Act projects and stories about people who are making a difference in their community.

In addition to the new website, Americans can follow the Rural Tour progress on Twitter at www.twitter.com/RuralTour where they can get the latest news and live updates from the road. Additionally, a USDA Facebook fan page is at www.facebook.com/usda features news and information regarding the department's ongoing mission across the country and around the world. Finally, USDA will be posting videos from the tour on YouTube at www.youtube.com/usda and photos at www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov.

In June, President Obama announced that Secretary Vilsack would lead the administration's Rural Tour to visit rural communities in states throughout the country. Secretary Vilsack is scheduled to lead Rural Tour events with a variety of other top administration officials over the coming weeks and months in Missouri, New Mexico, Iowa, and Ohio.