



USDA Rural Development hosting roundtables on jobs, economic growth

By Agri-Pulse Staff

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Washington, Dec. 15 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced Tuesday that USDA will begin a series of roundtables and community forums on job creation and economic growth in states throughout the country. The roundtables follow the Forum on Jobs and Economic Growth that President Obama hosted at the White House on December 3.

“President Obama has asked USDA and other federal agencies to listen to communities across the country to generate ideas to create jobs and economic opportunities,” Vilsack said. “USDA, which has offices serving every county in the nation, is taking the lead on having these conversations about job creation that will hopefully spur innovation, creativity and job creation that can help our communities to become stronger and more vibrant.”

The roundtables will be hosted by USDA Rural Development state directors and Farm Service Agency state executive directors. Participants will include business owners, community members, state and local officials, union members, non-profit organizations, economists and other interested parties. Participants will discuss steps that can be taken to grow the economy and put Americans back to work. Some of the roundtables may be regional in order to focus on shared interests, economic conditions and cooperative solutions.

The primary focus will be on ideas to accelerate job growth in rural America. Topics for discussion include:

- Exploring ways to rejuvenate and promote local businesses;
- Creating jobs by rebuilding America’s infrastructure;
- Creating new opportunities from existing ones, such as with value-added agricultural products;
- Supporting job growth among small businesses; and,
- Preparing workers for 21st century jobs.

Jobs forums currently scheduled include:

Michigan: Dec. 17
New Mexico: Dec. 17
New Mexico: Dec. 18
Montana: Dec. 18
Arizona: Dec. 21
Pennsylvania: Dec. 21
North Carolina: Dec. 21
Hawaii: Jan. 4, 5
North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota: Jan. 6
Iowa, Missouri and Illinois: Jan. 8
Nebraska: Jan. 8
Tennessee: Jan. 14
Kansas: Jan. 21
Puerto Rico: Jan. 22
Vermont: Feb. 3
New Hampshire: Feb. 4

Additional forums will be scheduled in the weeks ahead.

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