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United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

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USDA CONFERENCE TO FOCUS ON SOUTHWEST NORTH DAKOTA

BISMARCK, February 16, 2011 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development will hold a conference in Dickinson, N.D. today as the Southwest Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) Zone has been designated as one of America’s “Great Regions.” USDA Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider and USDA Rural Development Deputy Under Secretary Doug O’Brien along with local, state and federal stakeholders from government and business communities will come together in a cooperative effort at aiding development in the region.

“Through a collaboration of efforts, southwest North Dakota has seen a positive impact on businesses and community projects,” said Schneider. “The purpose of today’s conference is to highlight the success of these partnerships and to be strategic in crafting our future.”

In September 2010, The SW REAP Zone was designated as a USDA “Great Regions” for its demonstrated history of regional cooperation and business development. A priority at USDA is regional collaboration and as a result this conference will aim to build collaborative partnerships with public and private sector entities to bring new business opportunities to the region, resulting in job creation, capital investment, and improvement to the region’s quality of life.

The SW REAP Zone is a regional economic development organization that consists of nine counties and the south segment of the Three Affiliated Tribes Indian Reservations. Established under the USDA in 1995, the REAP Zone addresses critical issues related to out-migration, constraints in economic activity and growth, low density settlement patterns, stagnant or declining employment and isolation that has led to disconnection from markets, suppliers and centers of information and finance.

Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA Rural Development’s web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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