



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
West Virginia

Contact: Rick Satterfield
(800) 295-8228

**On-Line Q & A Session Scheduled for April 19 for
“Stronger Economies Together” Potential Applicants**
Application deadline is May 3, 2010

Morgantown, April 12, 2010 - A question and answer session will be held Monday, April 19, 2010 at 11:00 am Eastern time on the “Stronger Economies Together” (SET) program that offers technical assistance for rural regional development. The initiative was launched by USDA Rural Development in partnership with the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, the Governor’s Advisory Council on Rural Affairs, West Virginia State University Extension Service and other state and local partners.

Potential applicants and interested parties may join as follows:

- The link to the Adobe Connect webinar is: <http://msues.na4.acrobat.com/srdc/>
- Teleconference lines will be used for audio; the call-in number is 1-800-244-2500, participant code 351408#.
- An overview of Adobe Acrobat Connect can be found at <http://nercrd.psu.edu/SET/AdobeConnectOverview.pdf>.

The SET program is 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. Two rural West Virginia multi-county area entities will be chosen.

The SET program eligibility requirements are: 1) Applicants must be Multi-county regions (two or more counties) in West Virginia (or in conjunction with counties in neighboring states) where the average rural population is 51% or more of the region’s total population based on Census data or other sufficient data or documentation OR 2) Applicants must be Multi-county regions (two or more counties) in West Virginia (or in conjunction with counties in neighboring states) where 75% of the region's land area is located in rural areas of that region based on Census data or other sufficient data or documentation.

Applications are available upon request by emailing Richard Satterfield, WV USDA Rural Development, (800) 295-8228, Richard.Satterfield@wv.usda.gov or by visiting Rural Development’s web site at www.rurdev.usda.gov/wv. A complete application must be sent electronically to Richard.Satterfield@wv.usda.gov by May 3, 2010 (11:59 pm Eastern). An acknowledgment of receipt of application will be sent within 36 hours. The final decision will be announced by June 8, 2010. There is no application fee, but chosen applicants should be prepared to supply some minor logistical support.

Committed to the future of rural communities.

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Washington, D. C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3275 (voice) or (202) 720-6832 (TDD)

The successful 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 West Virginia State University Extension staff; and 4) Other educational and information-sharing opportunities with other SET program participants around the country.

If you have questions, please contact:

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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 West Virginia State Office at (800) 295-8228 or visit its website at www.rurdev.usda.gov/wv.

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