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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

USDA TO HOST FORUM ON JOBS, ECONOMIC GROWTH

Business Owners, Residents, Community Leaders Invited to Share Ideas on Creating Jobs

BISMARCK, N.D., December 30, 2009 – USDA Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider and USDA Farm Service Agency State Executive Director Aaron Krauter, announced today that the state office will hold a forum on job creation and economic growth on January 6, 2010, at the North Dakota School of Science, Wahpeton, N.D. from 10:00 a.m. to Noon. The forum follows the Forum on Jobs and Economic Growth that President Obama hosted at the White House on December 3.

“This forum will provide an opportunity for residents, business owners and community leaders across the state to share ideas on creating jobs and economic opportunities,” Schneider said.

“Government can help lay the groundwork for economic growth, but the best ideas for continued growth and job creation often come from local and community leaders. I look forward to hearing these ideas and sharing them with the Administration,” added Krauter.

The forum will include business owners, residents, state and local officials, union members, non-profit organizations, community leaders, economists and other interested parties. Participants will discuss steps that can be taken to grow the economy and put Americans back to work.

The primary focus will be on ideas to accelerate job growth in rural America. Some of the topics to be discussed are:

- 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.

USDA Rural Development administers and manages more than 40 housing, business, and community infrastructure and facility programs as laid out by Congress through a network of 6,100 employees located in 500 national, state and local offices. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of more than \$125 billion in loans and loan guarantees.

USDA's Farm Services Agency works to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural Americans. Some of the agency's efforts include facilitating income support, disaster assistance and conservation programs, providing operating loans for the procurement of farm equipment, seed and fertilizer, as well as offering ownership loans to help new and veteran producers purchase a farm.

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