



NEWS RELEASE

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Obama Administration Names Thomas Fern to Serve as State Director for Rural Development in Kentucky

WASHINGTON, November 20, 2009 – The Obama Administration today announced that Thomas Fern will serve as Kentucky State Director for Rural Development at the USDA.

“Thomas Fern will be an important advocate on behalf of rural communities throughout the state and will help administer the valuable programs and services provided by USDA that enhance the economic success of Kentucky’s residents and communities,” Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said.

Fern has worked tirelessly for the U.S. Department of Agriculture for 36 years. After working as an Agriculture Management Specialist and District Director of the Farmers Home Administration, he was appointed to serve as the Kentucky State Director of Rural Development from 1993 to 2001 under the Clinton Administration. Fern was with the Kentucky Tourism Development Cabinet’s Department of Parks from 2001 to 2003 as Director of Advertising and Marketing and currently serves on both the Kentucky Water Resource Development Commission and the Kentucky Appalachian Commission.

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 \$114 billion in loans and loan guarantees.

USDA provides leadership on food, agriculture and natural resources and touches the life of every American. Reflecting President Obama’s commitment to expanding economic opportunities in rural America, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack and USDA are working to enhance the availability of broadband; promote the development of renewable energy; conserve, maintain and improve our natural resources and environment; and promote a sustainable, safe, sufficient and nutritious food supply.

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