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News Release

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USDA Announces 47 Rural Communities and Regions that will Receive Technical Assistance to Help Build Long-Term Economic Growth

West Tennessee Residents to Benefit from Technical Assistance

NASHVILLE, Tenn., June 6, 2019 – Acting Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Joel Baxley today announced the names of [47 rural communities and regions that will receive technical assistance](#) to help create and implement long-term economic development plans. Tennessee Rural Development State Director Jim Tracy announced today along with Illinois State Director Douglas Wilson and Kentucky State Director Hilda Legg, that one of the rural communities and regions to receive assistance will serve residents of Tennessee.

“We are excited about our partnership with Purdue University and University of Kentucky,” Tracy said. “USDA continues to work hard to ensure that our rural communities have access to the same quality services available to those in urban areas.”

USDA is providing the assistance through an initiative called [Rural Economic Development Innovation \(REDI\)](#). USDA’s Innovation Center created REDI to support recommendations identified in the [Report to the President from the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity](#).

The partners are the National Association of Counties Research Foundation, the Rural Community Assistance Partnership, McClure Engineering Company, and Purdue University Extension/Community & Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky.

The following is a brief overview of the type of assistance each partner will provide:

- [The National Association of Counties Research Foundation](#) is partnering with the [National Association of Regional Councils](#) to develop a peer-learning program. Local and regional leaders in six rural communities and regions will be trained to implement multi-jurisdictional economic development plans and projects. The program will include workshops, team mentoring, educational webinars, community case studies and interactive learning.
- [McClure Engineering Company](#) is partnering with [CO.STARTERS](#), a Tennessee-based consulting firm, to help four rural communities and regions build plans to spur economic and community development, strengthen workforce readiness programs, and support entrepreneurship.

- [Purdue University Extension](#) and [Community & Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky](#) will support eight communities and regions to build long-term economic development plans by leveraging public and private funding sources.
- [The Rural Community Assistance Partnership](#) will provide technical assistance to 29 rural communities and regions through the organization's [WealthWorks](#) model. This model will help rural regions and communities identify and market local assets.

Each of the 47 communities and regions will be paired with one of the four partner organizations that will provide free technical assistance for up to two years to help rural towns and regions create and implement economic development plans. USDA awarded \$1.2 million in cooperative agreements to these partners in September 2018. The agreements will help the partners finance the free technical assistance. In Tennessee:

- The Influencers of the Confluence partnered with Purdue University and University of Kentucky. They will use planning assistance to support youth retention, asset promotion, infrastructure improvements and regional economic growth. Technical assistance will benefit residents of Alexander County in Illinois; Ballard, Carlisle, Fulton, Hickman and McCracken counties in Kentucky; and Obion County in Tennessee.

In April 2017, President Donald J. Trump established the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity to identify legislative, regulatory and policy changes that could promote agriculture and prosperity in rural communities. In January 2018, Secretary Perdue presented the Task Force's findings to President Trump. These findings included 31 recommendations to align the federal government with state, local and tribal governments to take advantage of opportunities that exist in rural America.

The REDI initiative was developed by the USDA [Rural Development Innovation Center](#) to support recommendations identified in the [Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity](#) (PDF, 5.4 MB). To view the categories of the recommendations, please view the [Rural Prosperity infographic](#) (PDF, 190 KB).

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov/tn.

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