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News Release

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USDA Partners to Help Rural Leaders Build Strategies to Achieve Prosperity

Rural Economic Development Initiative Provides Opportunities for Rural Communities to Plan for the Future

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Oct. 16, 2018 – Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett today announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has finalized four cooperative agreements to help rural communities create and implement economic development plans.

“Under the leadership of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, USDA is committed to being a strong partner in enhancing quality of life and building economic opportunity in rural America,” Hazlett said. “Asset-based planning is an important tool to complement and leverage existing regional resources and create a foundation for rural prosperity.”

USDA is partnering with four organizations to help build rural prosperity through the [Rural Development Innovation Center’s](#) Rural Economic Development Innovation (REDI) initiative. Hazlett announced these partnerships today during the Federal Priorities for Improving Water Forum, co-hosted by the Rural Community Assistance Partnership, the Rural Community Assistance Corp. and USDA.

Hazlett today announced the following partnerships:

- The Rural Community Assistance Partnership is receiving \$477,208 to support the National WealthWorks Technical Assistance Program. WealthWorks will help rural communities, specifically those in economically distressed areas, implement economic development plans. WealthWorks is a network of organizations that includes the Central Appalachia Network, Communities Unlimited, Community Roots, Region Five Development Commission, Rural Community Assistance Corp., Rural Development Initiatives, and Midwest Assistance Program.
- McClure Engineering Company is receiving \$200,000 to implement regional development plans in four rural communities. It will help them leverage assets to spur economic development and build a network of entrepreneurs. McClure’s goal is to leverage at least \$10 million in public and private investments in an entrepreneurial

program to create 130 businesses.

- Purdue University's Center for Regional Development is receiving \$388,949 to collaborate with the University of Kentucky to help rural communities in the Midwest and South develop five-year economic plans. The universities will focus on improving workforce and economic development, infrastructure and technology.
- The National Association of Counties Research Foundation is receiving \$138,780. It will help rural communities develop a peer-learning program to teach people how to implement economic development plans and projects. The program will include workshops, team mentoring, educational webinars, community case studies and interactive learning.

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. Increasing investments in rural infrastructure is a key recommendation of the task force.

To view the report in its entirety, please view the [Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity](#) (PDF, 5.4 MB). In addition, 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.

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