



National Rural Assembly



2011 GATHERING
BUILDING AN
INCLUSIVE
NATION



June 28-30 ■ St. Paul, Minnesota

Welcome

Second Acts

Nothing beats a circus coming to town. I once worked on a documentary about a travelling one-ring circus. It was so small that the elephant still pushed up the tent poles and the lady who walked the tight rope and hung by her hair also sledge-hammered in the tent stakes. The magician was called a mu-gician because he played keyboards during the rest of the show. He told me, “Here’s a circus joke for you. A guy comes to the tent looking for a job and the first question they ask him is, what’s your second act?”

Now the country is looking for a few new second acts. After the recent setbacks—the metropolitan housing collapse, the Wall Street meltdown, and spreading manufacturing retreat—the nation is looking for a next way forward. Where rural fits in is our question. We can keep doing the same old thing, sell off our commodities, promote cheaper labor, and fight with the cities for a share of the pie. Or we can try something different.

The current rural reality is unacceptable: too many children living in poverty; too few opportunities for an emerging workforce. And just as that would be an unacceptable reality for our cities, it cannot be the future for small American towns and rural communities. Rural can help turn things around for everybody.

The country desperately needs a more sustainable way to produce energy and power the grid. Rural can be part of getting that right, or we can hang on to the same fossil fuel systems that will employ fewer and fewer rural people and leave larger and larger sacrifice zones in their wake.

The country needs smarter and less energy-intensive ways to feed people. Rural can be a part of getting that right, or we can hang on to the same old systems that need fewer and fewer farmers. Similarly we can deny that the current food system plays a role in a national crisis of obesity and diabetes, or we can create systems that link unused rural capacity to national nutritional deficits.

The country urgently needs communications technology that makes access to markets more efficient and creates a new kind of critical mass for 21st century enterprise. Rural can be a part of getting that right, or we can wait passively as the promise of connectivity in education, healthcare, civic participation, and economic expansion continue to skip over vast areas and critical populations.

Here is our moment. We can follow a familiar course where fewer and fewer people do the heavy lifting. Or we can imagine an America that is truly inclusive, where we are all needed: all the people, all the places, all the second acts. We can reinvent the inclusive nation and this time get it right seeking the best ideas for community, security, and prosperity and a way to get us all there together.



Dee Davis
President, Center for Rural Strategies
Chairman, National Rural Assembly Steering Committee







The Rural Compact

The Rural Compact is a set of principles for building stronger rural communities and a stronger nation. Here’s what we believe:

- Rural America is more than the land. It is a way we are connected in culture, heritage, and national enterprise. While it may be vast, it is far from empty. Sixty million of us live in the American countryside, and far more grew up there. Rural Americans reflect the full diversity of the country in who we are, what we do, and what we want to achieve.
- When rural communities succeed, the nation does better, and cities and suburbs have more resources on which to build. Conversely, when rural communities falter, it drains the nation’s prosperity and limits what we can accomplish together.
- We now face the challenges of how we sustainably fuel, feed, and nurture both ourselves and a fragile world. A vital rural America has a contribution to make in this effort and the responsibility to take on that endeavor.
- We offer this compact as a set of principles on which to build the kind of rural America that is needed now and a rural America that is ready to face the challenges to come.

The Four Principles

 QUALITY IN EDUCATION <p>Every child should have an equal chance to learn, excel, and help lead America to a better, brighter future. Education policy should recognize the distinctive challenges and opportunities for rural schools and reflect the unique needs of those students, families, and educators.</p>	 HEALTH OF OUR PEOPLE <p>All Americans deserve access to good, affordable healthcare. If we want small towns and rural communities to contribute to the wellbeing of the nation, we need rural healthcare systems that include preventive care, health education, and both community-based and high-tech delivery systems.</p>
 STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL RESOURCES <p>Eighty percent of our country is rural. We all have a responsibility to protect the environment and develop and sustain our natural resources in ways that strengthen rural communities for the long haul, and develop stronger natural-resource-based economies.</p>	 INVESTMENT IN OUR COMMUNITIES <p>All Americans need access to a safe and equitable system for saving, borrowing, and building capital. Rural communities need public and private investment, philanthropic resources, and the tools to develop their own assets.</p>

Program Agenda - Tuesday

Tuesday, June 28

Meeting Objectives:

Articulate a message that raises national awareness of rural issues.

Raise a call to action for members of the National Rural Assembly around the issues identified in the Rural Compact.

Provide opportunities for action planning on rural policy issues.

Create opportunities for participants to make connections that will advance their work on rural policy issues.

Educate policymakers and other leaders on issues prevalent in rural policy.

9:30am—Registration Opens, Lower Level Coat Check

9:30am-3:45pm—Let's Organize!

Groups representing a variety of regions and sectors will meet pre-conference to build out their workplans, participation, and opportunities for further policy engagement. These include:

- Great Plains Network (9:30am-noon, 2:30pm-3:30pm).....Governors I
- Central Appalachian Regional Network (12:00pm-3:45pm)Governors III
- Broadband Working Group (2:00pm-3:45pm)Governors II
- Midwest Rural Assembly (12:00pm-3:00pm)Governors IV
- Mid South Network (2:30pm-3:45pm).....Governors V
- Rural Development Philanthropy Collaborative (2:30pm-3:45pm)State I
- Transportation Working Group (2:30pm-3:45pm)State II

Organizer: Center for Rural Strategies, Whitesburg, Kentucky

4:00pm—Opening Plenary: Welcome, Minnesota Ballroom

The Rural Assembly Steering Committee and Host Committee welcome participants to the 2011 Gathering of the National Rural Assembly.

Welcome: Dee Davis, President, Center for Rural Strategies and Chairman of the National Rural Assembly Steering Committee
Niel Ritchie, Executive Director, League of Rural Voters and Chairman, 2011 Gathering Host Committee

4:30pm—Speaking Rural Truth to Power, Minnesota Ballroom

Rural leaders will share stories and examples of the diverse spirit of rural America. Presenters will include multi-generational leaders representing areas of youth policy, natural resource management, broadband, tribal affairs, healthcare, education, philanthropy, housing, finance, and transportation.

Moderator: Carol Blackmon, Quitman County Development Organization,

Speakers: Marks, Mississippi

- Olga Cardoso, Llano Grande Center for Research and Development, Edcouch, Texas
- Billy Altom, Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living, Little Rock, Arkansas
- Al White, Action Communication and Education Reform, Duck Hill, Mississippi
- Carolyn Ford, North Florida Educational Development Corporation, Gretna, Florida
- Dylan Kruse, Sustainable Northwest, Portland, Oregon
- Richard Oswald, farmer and contributor to The Daily Yonder, Langdon, Missouri
- Loris Taylor, Native Public Media, Flagstaff, Arizona
- Nancy Straw, West Central Initiative, Fergus Falls, Minnesota
- Peggy Flanagan, Wellstone Action, St. Paul, Minnesota
- Josie Raphaelito, Center for Native American Youth, Aspen Institute (*Invited*)

Organizer: The Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire

5:30pm—Host Committee Reception, Garden Court East

**7:00pm—Dinner and Keynote: A National Strategic Narrative
Minnesota Ballroom**

Speakers: Colonel Mark Mykleby, United States Marine Corps
Captain Wayne Porter, United States Navy



Program Agenda - Wednesday

7:30am—Breakfast, Minnesota Ballroom

Participants are invited to enjoy breakfast and conversation around topics of interest.

8:30am—Welcome and Orientation, Minnesota Ballroom

8:40am—The Future of Rural America and the Rural Assembly

Minnesota Ballroom

The opening plenary will start the day with a look at the state of rural America and the opportunities that lie ahead for the National Rural Assembly.

Moderator: Brian Dabson, Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI)
Rural Futures Lab

Panelists:

- Charles Fluharty, RUPRI, Columbia, Missouri
- Kenneth Johnson, Carsey Institute, Durham, New Hampshire
- Peter Morris, National Congress of America Indians, Washington, D.C.
- Delia Perez, Llano Grande Center for Research and Development, Edcouch, Texas
- Kim Phinney, YouthBuild USA, Somerville, Massachusetts

Organizer: RUPRI, Columbia, Missouri

10:00am—Ready, Set, Breakout!, Minnesota Ballroom

Participants are encouraged to select morning and afternoon work sessions that relate to their work in the rural policy arena. The recommendations developed within these sessions will inform the action items of the Rural Assembly going forward.

10:05am—Break

10: 15am—Breakout Sessions: Round 1

First round of policy work sessions. Participants may select the session they wish to attend. See pages 6-8 for descriptions and locations. Participants may choose from the following breakouts:

- Federal Education Grants: How’s It Working for Rural Schools?..... State I
- Rural Philanthropy Part I: The Rural Development Philanthropy Approach to Growing Locally-Controlled Philanthropic AssetsCapitol Ballroom
- Rural Healthcare: Answers and OpportunitiesState II
- Rural Broadband Innovative Strategies and Policy IssuesGovernors V
- Changing the Climate – Understanding Rural Perspectives, Opportunities and Solutions to Address Climate ChangeGovernors I
- A Seat at the Table: The Youth Voice in Rural Community VisioningGovernors III
- Small Business and Entrepreneurship Policy for Rural ProsperityGovernors IV
- “No Man’s Land” – South Texas Working Groups Fighting to Improve and Empower the Quality of Life in Colonias.....State III
- Revitalizing the Rural Economy through Infrastructure DevelopmentGovernors II

Wednesday, June 29



Program Agenda - Wednesday

Wednesday, June 29

12:00pm—Lunch and Rural Innovations Panel, Minnesota Ballroom

A panel of rural leaders will share examples of rural innovation and strategies within the four pillars of the Rural Compact. Panelists will address issues such as environment, tribal affairs, education, and investment.

Keynote speaker: FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn

Moderator: Anita Brown-Graham, Institute for Emerging Issues

Panelists:

- Rural America and Indian Country: Tanya Fiddler, Four Bands Community Fund, Eagle Butte, South Dakota
- Environment: Michael F. Masterman, Extreme Endeavors and Consulting, Phillipi, West Virginia
- Rural Education: Doris Williams, Rural School and Community Trust, Washington, D.C.
- Rural Investment: Ron Phillips, Coastal Enterprises, Wiscasset, Maine

Organizer: Institute for Emerging Issues, Raleigh, North Carolina

2:00pm—Break

2:30pm—Breakout Sessions: Round 2

Continuation of policy work sessions. See pages 9-11 for descriptions and locations. Participants may choose from the following breakouts:

- Transitions to Adulthood: Policy Issues Affecting Rural Youth Ages 16-25 State I
- Immigration Reform – The New MessageGovernors I
- eCARE & Technology to the Rural Health Rescue – If Key Policy Barriers Can Be Addressed!Governors II
- Rural Wealth Creation: The Approach, the Reality, and the PoliciesGovernors V
- Growing Rural America's Green EconomyCapitol Ballroom
- Rural Philanthropy Part II: Policy Catalysts to Leverage Growth of Rural Philanthropy.....Governors IV
- Rural America and Social SecurityState II
- It's a New Day for Affordable Housing.....Governors III
- Getting There: Rural Communities and Transportation PolicyState III

4:00pm—Break

4:30pm—"Where Soldiers Come From," Minnesota Ballroom

See excerpts from a new documentary from filmmaker Heather Courtney and hear from one of the young men whose four-year journey takes him from a small town in northern Michigan to Afghanistan and back home again.

Moderator: Emily White Hat, National Congress of American Indians

Panelists: Heather Courtney, Dominic Fredianelli

6:00pm—Adjourn for the day

7:00pm—A Minnesota Offering, Minnesota Ballroom

Keynote from The Honorable Mark Ritchie, Minnesota Secretary of State



Program Agenda - Thursday

Thursday, June 30

7:30am—Breakfast Roundtables Hosted by Youth Participants Minnesota Ballroom

Assembly participants will be invited to engage in conversations with young leaders about policy issues pertinent to the Rural Compact.
Organizer: YouthBuild USA, Somerville, Massachusetts & Llano Grande Center for Research and Development, Edcouch, Texas

8:30am—A Call to Action: Reports from the Field Minnesota Ballroom

Hear recommendations from yesterday’s breakout sessions and determine next steps for the Assembly.
Organizer: Brushy Fork Institute, Berea, Kentucky

9:45am—Break

10:00am—Tools and Skills for Our Work

Sessions are offered around skills and competencies for policy work and network sustainability. See pages 12-13 for descriptions and locations.
Available sessions:

- Introduction to Intentional Social Media.....Governors II
- Digital Stories and Reflecting on Policy Change Work.....Capitol Ballroom
- Cultural Organizing and Collaborating Across Sectors.....Governors I
- Rural Policy 101Governors III
- How to Build a Local Broadband NetworkGovernors V
- Farm Bill: Winning Building Blocks to a Better Food and Farming SystemGovernors IV

11:00am—Break

11:15am—Building an Inclusive Nation Minnesota Ballroom

Assembly Steering Committee Chairman Dee Davis reflects on the work of participants and how we move forward together in the coming year.
Organizer: Center for Rural Strategies, Whitesburg, Kentucky

12:30pm—Adjourn, Box Lunches available at Ballroom entry*

* Please complete the onsite evaluation found in your conference materials. We will gladly trade your completed evaluation for a box lunch!



Wednesday Morning Breakouts

Breakout 1

Wednesday Morning, 10:15-11:45



Federal Education Competitive Grants: How's It Working for Rural Schools?

Presenters

Robert Mahaffey, Rural School and Community Trust

Doris Williams, Rural School and Community Trust

John White, U.S. Department of Education

Federal competitive education grants, whether Investing in Innovation (i3), Race to the Top, School Improvement (SIG), or Promise Neighborhoods, all have significant impact on how federal funds make their way to rural schools and districts. The Rural School and Community Trust has done extensive research in this area and released a comprehensive report entitled "Taking Advantage: The Rural Competitive Preference in the Investing in Innovation Program" that will be the focus of this session. In addition, we'll discuss the latest information from the U.S. Department of Education and the federal budget regarding competitive grants and formula funds, particularly Title I and the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP). This discussion is designed for all those who have applied for these grants, plan to do so in the future, or want to know how these essential resources are being distributed and what the effect has been and could be moving forward.



Rural Philanthropy Part I: The Rural Development Philanthropy Approach to Growing Locally-Controlled Philanthropic Assets

Presenters

Elsa Noterman, Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group

John Molinaro, Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group

Nancy Straw, West Central Initiative

Peter Pennekamp, Humboldt Area Foundation

Innovative rural organizations have found new ways to attract and grow philanthropic resources and use them in community-led efforts to improve the economic and social viability of rural places. Part I of this work session will show how this "Rural Development Philanthropy" approach unites the tools of community development and philanthropy to transform communities. It will provide inspiring real-life examples that illustrate the difference this approach is making by tapping every available resource to support locally-driven initiatives that build a better future for all the residents of rural places.



Rural Healthcare: Answers and Opportunities

Presenter

Steph Larsen, Center for Rural Affairs

Most of us have questions about the Affordable Care Act. What is actually in it? How will it affect my family, business and community? When will particular provisions go into effect? We should have questions, because the Affordable Care Act affects rural communities in substantial ways. From access to primary care doctors to affordable insurance options for self-employed individuals, this law has the potential to create more healthy rural people and more vibrant communities. In this session, we will give an overview of the Affordable Care Act with special attention to the provisions that rural towns can use to make their communities better. We will also discuss how to be involved in the process of making the law even better. We are all affected by the Affordable Care Act. Join us to find out what this new law means for you.



Rural Broadband Innovative Strategies and Policy Issues

Presenters

Edyael Casaperalta, Center for Rural Strategies

amalia deloney, Center for Media Justice

Steven Renderos, Main Street Project

Fabiola Carrión, Progressive States Network

This session, organized by members of the Rural Broadband Policy Group, seeks to 1) engage participants in conversations about pertinent rural broadband policy issues, 2) provide information about opportunities to engage in these issues at the local, state, and federal levels, and 3) draw rural broadband recommendations for adoption by the Rural Assembly. The 90-minutes session will feature facilitated small and large group discussions about Universal Service Fund Reform, the impact of the proposed AT&T/T-Mobile merger on wireless access in rural areas, and responses to state bills that hinder or encourage development of local broadband networks. These conversations are designed to collectively draft recommendations on rural broadband policy issues and inform the work of the Rural Broadband Policy Group.

The Rural Broadband Policy Group is a growing national coalition of rural broadband advocates. The RBPG has two goals: 1) to articulate national broadband policies that provide opportunities for rural communities to participate fully in the nation's democracy, economy, culture, and society, and 2) to spark national collaboration among rural advocates for fast, affordable, and reliable Internet broadband advocates.



Changing the Climate – Understanding Rural Perspectives, Opportunities and Solutions to Address Climate Change

Presenters

Kathy Lynn, University of Oregon

Jim Kleinschmit, Institute for Agricultural and Trade Policy

Julia Olmstead, Institute for Agricultural Trade Policy

Melissa Cook, Sustainable Development Institute for Menominee College

Climate change is one of the most profound challenges faced by society. However, recent policies to address this global problem have largely failed to gather necessary support to enact legislation that would curb greenhouse gas emissions and help communities prepare for the resulting impacts of climate change on people and surrounding landscapes. This session will explore key rural concerns about climate change and proposed policies and present examples of on-the-ground and policy-based solutions that demonstrate the role that rural communities around the country can play to effectively address climate change.



A Seat at the Table: The Youth Voice in Rural Community Visioning

Presenter

Christina Barsky, Rural Dynamics

A Seat at the Table will provide participants the opportunity to delve deeper into the discussion of rural youth outmigration and the root causes behind it. Session participants will develop new skills, learn facilitation techniques, and take away useful tools that will enable them to ask the powerful questions necessary of the young people within their communities; bringing the often lacking youth perspective to the forefront of community visioning.



Small Business and Entrepreneurship Policy for Rural Prosperity

Presenters

Connie Loden, Economic Development Corp. of Manitowoc County

Kathy Moxon, Redwood Coast Rural Action

Few things are more important to rural communities than rebuilding economies as they transition away from traditional agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining. How to create vibrant economies is elusive and progress is slow and difficult to sustain. This session will focus on current trends in rural economic and business development as well as supporting youth entrepreneurs. In addition, we will be discussing the current policy landscape—what is hot, and what is not—and identify policy opportunities as the administration moves into budgeting for the 2012 year.



“No Man’s Land” – South Texas Working Groups Fighting to Improve and Empower the Quality of Life in Colonias

Presenters

Marlene Chavez, La Union del Pueblo Entero

Martha Sanchez, La Union del Pueblo Entero

Colonias are unincorporated, isolated, impoverished rural slums along the Mexican border. Colonias are characterized as the “Third World” in the United States due to the lack of basic infrastructure services such as adequate water, drainage, paved streets, and electricity. In Texas alone, there are more than 2,000 colonias providing homes to more than 200,000 people, mostly Mexican-American. The Rio Grande Valley, which is in the southernmost region in Texas, is one of the poorest areas in the country. Two local counties, Hidalgo and Cameron, consistently rank among the five poorest urban counties in the nation every year. In 2006, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that more than 32% of all Hidalgo County families were living below the poverty line, over three times the national rate. This rate has risen with the economic downturn. This workshop examines how NGOs in the LRGV have partnered together to establish the RGV-Equal Voice Network Coalition to improve the quality of life in the colonias, what the coalition is doing to combat the issues through advocacy, education and legislative action, why it is important to invest in rural communities, and how proposed anti-immigrant policies will devastate our border rural communities instead of improving living conditions.



Revitalizing the Rural Economy through Infrastructure Development

Presenters

Robert Stewart, Rural Community Assistance Partnership

Ari Neumann, Rural Community Assistance Partnership

Although the farm economy is strong, many rural communities were devastated by the recent economic downturn and struggle to find ways to attract new businesses and rebuild their local economies. The 2012 Farm Bill gives Congress a chance to assist these downtrodden communities by enacting a robust Rural Development Title that prioritizes the development of the basic infrastructure that is necessary to attract industry. Without adequate water and wastewater systems, essential community facilities and other basic infrastructure, rural America risks being left behind as factories close and entrepreneurs are discouraged from starting small businesses in rural towns. Unfortunately, as the needs of rural communities have increased, federal investment in Rural Development has not kept pace. This session will focus on the RD Title and federal investment in the basic support programs that undergird rural communities and how these programs can revitalize our rural non-farm economy.



Wednesday Afternoon Breakouts

Breakout 2

Wednesday Afternoon, 2:30-4:00



Transitions to Adulthood: Policy Issues Affecting Rural Youth Ages 16-25

Presenters

Kim Phinney, YouthBuild USA

Charlotte Golar Richie, YouthBuild USA

John White, U.S. Department of Education

Connie Stewart, California Center for Rural Policy

Billy Altom, Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL)

Kathy Hatch, Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL)

This session will examine a range of policy issues that affect rural young adults ages 16-25 as they make the transition to adulthood. The presenters will share policy challenges, recent research, and address specific active pieces of legislation across issues of post-secondary education access, workforce development, restorative youth justice, and aging out of current youth service systems.



Immigration Reform – The New Message

Presenters

Tirso Moreno, Farmworker Association of Florida

Martha Sanchez, La Union del Pueblo Entero

John Herrera, Self Help Service Corp

The stories of immigrant communities are the stories of rural communities. This session will invite and encourage a fresh conversation on the movement around immigration reform, in ways that honor all immigrants. We believe that no human being is illegal regardless of their documentation status and seek to defend the human rights of all people to live free of persecution, exploitation, and injustice. In this session we will dispel some of the myths associated with the immigrant community and share digital stories that reflect various immigrant struggles. Given the current political landscape and recent anti-immigrant legislation, we look at strategies that have been successful in states like Florida and Utah to prevent enactment of anti-immigrant legislation. We will host a dialogue about the lessons that can be learned from work in these states and how those strategies and messages might offer insight about what are the powerful messages that can actually be effective to garner support for positive immigration reform policies at the state and federal levels.



eCARE & Technology to the Rural Health Rescue – If Key Policy Barriers Can Be Addressed!

Presenters

Mandy Bell, Avera Health

Lisa Kilawee, Avera Health

Trista Kontz-Bartels, Avera Health

Taylor Ptacek, Avera Center for Public Policy

Organizers will present information on eHealth services that have been developed by Avera Health, a regional health system in the Midwest. eHealth services can maintain or improve rural access to high quality care while focusing on providing care locally. eHealth Services including electronic intensive care unit (eICU); eEmergency; ePharmacy; and eConsult have the potential to be replicated in many rural communities if policy barriers are addressed. This session will: 1) Provide information on replicating eHealth Services developed and utilized by Avera Health and its many partners in rural communities across the U.S.; 2) brainstorm additional uses for eHealth technologies; 3) provide information on identified policy barriers to replicating eHealth services; and, 4) identify new stakeholders and partners in addressing the policy issues among rural assembly attendees to serve on regional eHealth policy work groups.



Rural Wealth Creation: The Approach, the Reality, and the Policies

Presenters

John Molinaro, The Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group

Thomas Watson, Rural Support Partners

Millions of families across rural America work hard, play by the rules, and see the fruits of their labor and the wealth created by the assets in their communities accrue to the benefit of distant investors – often leaving behind a degraded environment and depleted community resources. The Wealth Creation Approach seeks to have more wealth created by rural assets remain in the community and benefit the people who live there. It builds on the seven forms of capital—social, financial, political, natural, intellectual, built, and individual – critical to create wealth. In this interactive workshop, you will learn about this distinctive approach and how it is being implemented in some of most distressed rural regions. Bring your ideas and wisdom to help identify policy barriers, opportunities, and models, and help develop a policy campaign that will advance this sensible and timely approach for all people and places in rural America.



Growing Rural America's Green Economy

Presenter

Carol Werner, Environmental and Energy Study Institute

This session is designed for participants to engage in learning and facilitated conversations about green job development strategies with the purpose of identifying specific policy recommendations that can contribute to a national rural policy agenda. The session will begin by broadly defining the landscape of the green economy and current policy environment from a rural perspective. A range of potential policy solutions will be introduced to help the work group think about possibilities for collective action. The second half of the session will involve a facilitated process to help the group identify policy recommendations that have the greatest potential to improve prospects for green job development in rural communities.

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Rural Philanthropy Part II: Policy Catalysts to Leverage Growth of Rural Philanthropy

Presenters

Elsa Noterman, Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group

Nancy Straw, West Central Initiative

Jeff Yost, Nebraska Community Foundation

Part II of the Rural Philanthropy session will focus on state and federal policy initiatives and other efforts that can serve as a catalyst to help leverage and capture more philanthropic resources for rural America. It will forge a specific set of policy recommendations for general consumption within and outside the Assembly.



Rural America and Social Security

Presenters

Roberto Gallardo, Mississippi State

Bill Bishop, Daily Yonder

Niel Ritchie, League of Rural Voters

Social Security has a significant impact on the economies of rural places. Rural residents are more likely to receive some form of Social Security payment than their metropolitan counterparts. Social Security is likely to be a greater percentage of personal income for rural people. And Social Security has more impact on reducing poverty levels in rural areas. But the rural people who have the most to gain or lose from changes Social Security policy are often portrayed as uninterested in social insurance or any public strategy for poverty reduction. This session presents new research on the current economic impact of Social Security in rural areas and provides economic modeling on the potential impact of Social Security changes on various types of rural economies. Participants will discuss how they can use this information to inform their rural constituencies about the role of Social Security and how to most effectively engage rural constituents in policy discussions about the future of Social Security.



It's A New Day for Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities, A Day of Significant Challenges

Presenters

Sandy Rosenblith, Stand Up for Rural America

Joe Belden, Housing Assistance Council

Stan Keasling, Rural Community Assistance Corporation

Is there any good news? Absolutely! Better than a thousand rural nonprofits are strengthening their communities, making them sustainable, by developing appropriate affordable housing. Many of these, and hundreds more, deliver related services like financial literacy training and housing counseling.

What's the bad news? It's becoming harder and more complicated to develop affordable housing. Here are some of the new complexities. Rural America is gray and getting grayer. At the same time, the population is diversifying due to incomers, including retirees, people and their children seeking jobs in industries like meat packing. In one small Minnesota town, teachers must teach pupils speaking some 24 languages. The credit crisis and reactions to it are changing the entire system of mortgage finance. At every level, government resources have shrunk and no end is in sight. Rural America started poorer and remains poorer than the rest of us.

Why should I care about affordable housing? The simplest answer is that you and your family need appropriate housing that you can afford. More broadly, you should care because affordable housing is an essential component of sustainable communities and the nonprofits developing it are the same organizations that construct the water and sewer systems, clean up the rivers, build the health clinics, renovate and operate the HeadStart classrooms, develop and program the senior centers, and deliver the Meals on Wheels.

Please join us. Listen, learn, contribute and participate in formulating recommendations to the entire Assembly.



Getting There: Rural Communities and Transportation Policy

Presenters

National Rural Assembly Transportation Policy Group

Transportation affects all aspects of rural life. Education, healthcare, jobs, development, civic participation—all require affordable, reliable transportation. Rural residents face special challenges in getting places. Distances between towns are greater. Population density is generally lower. Access to public transit can be problematic. All of this is exacerbated by lower per-capita incomes of rural residents.

The Rural Transportation Policy Group, a Rural Assembly working group, will present information on transportation policies that help rural communities. The information will be presented in the context of reauthorization of the federal transportation program, which is currently underway. Presenters will represent a diverse set of organizations and communities, including independent living, low-income car ownership, regional transit, sustainable development, and others. The groups will also outline ways that rural groups can participate in large, national efforts to reform transportation policy for the benefit of marginalized communities.



Thursday Morning Breakouts

Breakout 3: Tools and Skill Building Sessions

Thursday Morning, 9:45am-11:00am

Introduction to Intentional Social Media

Presenter

Amy Sterndale, The Carsey Institute

This session will not teach you how to open a Facebook account. It will help you ask critical questions about your organization's goals for social media planning. We'll cover what you need to do before you start, how to create a creative brief, making a social media plan, an overview of social media tools, and why you need a social media policy. Amy will share her greatest success and greatest failure and explain why no one should call themselves a social media expert.

Digital Stories and Reflecting on Policy Change Work

Presenters

Victoria Creed, Learning Partners

Kelly Griffith, Southwest Center for Economic Integrity

Delia Perez, Llano Grande Center for Research and Development

Kim Phinney, YouthBuild USA

Mimi Pickering, Appalshop

Shawn Poynter and Marty Newell, Center for Rural Strategies

The National Rural Assembly is part of an initiative to bring rural voice to policy discussions in this country. The initiative is working with Learning Partners to adapt PlaceStories, a digital storytelling platform, as the vehicle to share learning from the work. Presenters will share the first examples of how this might be applied. Participants will be able to explore this intersection between evaluation and media as well as assist in planning the next steps in utilizing this approach to reporting including a two-day, hands-on workshop later this year.

Cultural Organizing and Collaborating Across Sectors

Presenters

Caron Atlas, Arts & Democracy Project

Steven Renderos, Main Street Project/MAG-Net

amalia deloney, Center for Media Justice and Arts & Democracy Project

Arts & Democracy Project and its partners invite you to participate in a conversation about cultural organizing, collaborating across sectors, and the role these approaches play in rural development and social change. Based on the belief that cultural organizing is about placing art and culture at the center of an organizing strategy and also about organizing from a particular tradition, cultural identity, and community of place or worldview, A&D will lead an interactive discussion that explores how the practice of cultural and creative expression is a means to effect deep and lasting social change. Participants will be encouraged to share their own experiences and best practices, as well as hear from others across the country.

Rural Policy 101

Presenters

Elise Hoben, Rural LISC

Stephen Truman Sugg, Truman LaCombe LLC

Affecting public policy is often intimidating—even for folks doing amazing work. This session, led by a former congressional staffer and (gasp) lobbyist, shreds the jargon and focuses on the big picture and grassroots empowerment. Topics will include:

- Farm Bill: What's in It, What's Not, and Why It Matters—A Primer Without Acronyms
- USDA Funding: Who Gets the Steak, Who Gets the Hamburger, Who Gets the Leftovers
- Advocacy 101: Practical Tips and Usable Resources
- Developing Relationships with Policymakers: A Worksheet to Make It Happen

This session will appeal to all your senses!

How to Build a Local Broadband Network

Presenters

Wally Bowen, Mountain Area Information Network (MAIN)

Edyael Casaperalta, Center for Rural Strategies

Sean McLaughlin, Access Humboldt

As more everyday activities move online, such as banking, setting up doctors appointments, applying for social services, submitting a job application, higher education opportunities, and launching new businesses, broadband becomes an essential utility for progress and opportunity. Yet a 2010 study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project shows that only half of rural residents have broadband in the home.

Don't wait any longer for a big telecom corporation to extend service to your area, join this skills building session to learn how to build a local broadband network! Join our panelists and learn about models like municipal broadband, non-profit broadband, and community anchor broadband (where a non-profit helps coordinate, develop and interconnect public, education and government networks). They will share their expertise, knowledge, and resources about how to build a local network that is responsive to community needs and connects your community with fast, affordable, and reliable internet service.

Local ownership and investment in community is one of the rural broadband principles outlined by the Rural Broadband Policy Group. Local ownership of broadband infrastructure and local networks can address problems such as limited provider choice, affordability, slow speeds, lack of access to service, and investment in deployment. Local broadband networks are more than an internet service provider; they boost local economy, create jobs, and invest in the development of communities.

Farm Bill: Winning Building Blocks to a Better Food and Farming System

Presenters

Adam Warthesen, Land Stewardship Project

Chuck Hassebrook, Center for Rural Affairs

Julia Olmstead, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Join panelists for a discussion about how to engage in policy reform that is good for the land, farmers, consumers, and our communities.

Conference Presenters

Keynote Speakers

Dee Davis is the founder and president of the Center for Rural Strategies. Dee has helped design and lead national public information campaigns on topics as diverse as commercial television programming and federal banking policy. Dee began his media career in 1973 as a trainee at Appalshop, an arts and cultural center devoted to exploring Appalachian life and social issues in Whitesburg, Kentucky. He serves on the boards of directors of Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, Fund for Innovative Television, the Media and Democracy Coalition, and Feral Arts of Brisbane, Australia. He is also a member of the Institute for Rural Journalism's national advisory board as well as the advisory board for the Rural Policy Research Institute.

Mignon L. Clyburn was nominated as a member of the Federal Communications Commission on June 25, 2009, and sworn in August 3, 2009. Her term runs until June 30, 2012. Prior to her swearing in as Commissioner, She served for 11 years as the representative of South Carolina's sixth district on the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (PSC). She served as chair of the PSC from July 2002 through June 2004. Commissioner Clyburn was elected to the South Carolina PSC following 14 years as the publisher and general manager of The Coastal Times, a Charleston-based weekly newspaper that focused primarily on issues affecting the African American community. She owned and operated the family-founded newspaper following her graduation from the University of South Carolina, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Banking, Finance & Economics. For well over two decades, Commissioner Clyburn has been actively involved in myriad community organizations. Prior to her appointment at the FCC, Commissioner Clyburn served on the South Carolina

State Energy Advisory Council, the Trident Technical College Foundation, the South Carolina Cancer Center Board, the Columbia College Board of Visitors, the Palmetto Project Board (as secretary/treasurer) She also is a Life Member of the NAACP, a member of The Links, Inc. and the SC Advisory Council of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Commissioner Clyburn has received a number of honors and awards, including being selected as the 2006 James C. Bonbright Honoree (awarded by the Southeastern Energy Conference, Terry College of Business at the University of Georgia) and receiving the 2007 Lincoln C. Jenkins Award for business and community contributions presented by the Columbia (SC) Urban League.

Mark "Puck" Mykleby (Col., USMC) was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps following his graduation from the United States Naval Academy in 1987. During his career as Marine fighter pilot, he served in numerous operational and staff billets and participated in combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, among others. From July 2007 to July 2009, he developed strategy for US Special Operations Command and from July 2009 until April 2011 he served as a special strategic assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff developing grand strategy. He will retire from the Marine Corps in July 2011.

The Honorable Mark Ritchie was elected to his second term as Minnesota's Secretary of State in 2010. In his role as the state's chief elections officer, he partners with township, city, and county officials to organize elections on behalf of Minnesota's 3.7 million eligible voters. He also oversees a wide range of services for Minnesota businesses provided by the Office of Secretary of State. He currently serves as president of the National Association of Secretaries of State. In the 1980s,

Ritchie served in the Minnesota Department of Agriculture working to address the economic crisis threatening family farms and rural communities. He founded the Minneapolis-based Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy and served as its President from 1988 to 2006.

Wayne Porter (Capt., USN) was born in Fullerton, California, and graduated from the University of Southern California. Wayne holds two masters of science degrees from the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, and has completed numerous tours in the United States and abroad. He is currently assigned to the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, serving as a Special Assistant to the Chairman for Strategy. He co-authored, with Col. Mark Mykleby, the *National Strategic Narrative* (by "Mr Y"), published by the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars and featured on CNN, MSNBC, and NPR.

Panelists and Breakout Session Leaders

Billy Altom is the Executive Director of the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL). APRIL is a national membership organization dedicated to advancing the rights and responsibilities of people with disabilities in rural America. APRIL provides leadership and resources on rural independent living through a national network of rural centers for independent living, programs and individuals concerned with the unique aspect of rural independent living. The goal of APRIL is to work together to find solutions to common problems and to bring rural issues in independent living into focus on the national level.

Caron Atlas works to support and stimulate arts and culture as an integral part of social change and is currently directing three programs to further this goal: the Arts & Democracy Project, the Arts + Community Change Initiative, and Place + Displaced. She also teaches at NYU and Pratt Institute and is the co-editor of *Critical Perspectives: Writings on Art and Civic Dialogue*. Previously Caron worked at Appalshop, was a Warren Weaver Fellow at the Rockefeller Foundation, and holds a master's degree from the University of Chicago.

Christina Barsky oversees the policy agenda and directs the work of the Northern Plains Initiative, a regional collaborative housed at Rural Dynamics Incorporated (RDI). Since joining RDI in 2006, Christina has worked on a variety of asset and economic development programs and policy agenda items across the Northern Plains region. She is a graduate of Skidmore College.

Joe Belden is Deputy Executive Director of the Housing Assistance Council (HAC). Previously a research associate at HAC, he has also worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, on Capitol Hill, and for several policy-oriented research organizations in Washington, D.C. Belden is co-author of *Housing in Rural America: Building Affordable and Inclusive Communities* (Sage 1998) and *Dirt Rich, Dirt Poor: America's Food and Farm Crisis* (Routledge 1986). He is a graduate of the University of Texas-Austin and the Baylor University Law School.

Mandy Bell is the eCARE Development Director at Avera Health in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and specializes in new service line launches and business. She was also instrumental in the early development of eEmergency and ePharmacy and in writing grants that have funded the projects. Mandy has a B.A. from Augustana College, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and is working toward her master's in healthcare administration from the University of Minnesota.

Bill Bishop is a founder and co-editor of the Daily Yonder, the online rural

news journal. Bishop is the author of *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of America Is Tearing Us Apart* (Houghton Mifflin, 2008). He previously was a writer on the special projects team at the Austin (Texas) *American-Statesman*, associate editor and columnist for the Lexington (Kentucky) *Herald-Leader*, and a community newspaper journalist. He was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in editorial writing in 1989; he won the Gerald Loeb Award for commentary on business and economics in 1996 and was a finalist in 1998.

Carol Blackmon is a consultant who worked as a regional coach for W.K. Kellogg Foundation and an event coordinator and facilitator for Children's Defense Fund's Southern Regional Office. She was a Program Officer with Foundation for the Mid South, Executive Director of Political Education and Economic Development Foundation, a project consultant with Children's Defense Fund, and project manager for Mid South African American Philanthropy project. Her board service includes Mississippi Housing Partnership board chair, founding board member of the National Center for Black Philanthropy, and founding board member of the Greater Jackson Community Foundation.

Wally Bowen is founder and executive director of the nonprofit Mountain Area Information Network (MAIN) in Asheville, North Carolina. Bowen was an early advocate of locally-owned "middle-mile" fiber networks while representing western North Carolina on the N.C. Rural Internet Access Authority. He has spoken on media reform at the Aspen Institute, the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communications, NetRoots Nation 2011, and all four National Media Reform Conferences. In 2008, he was featured in Google's launch of the "Free the Airwaves" campaign for reform of U.S. spectrum policies.

Anita Brown-Graham is Director of the Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI). Before joining IEI, Anita served as a Professor of Law and Government

at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Government, and served as a law clerk in the eastern district of California and as business litigation counsel in a Sacramento, California, law firm. Anita serves as a Trustee of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, the North Carolina Small Towns Action Council, the Self Help Venture Fund, MDC, Inc., and the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center. She is an Eisenhower Fellow and an American Marshall Fellow.

Olga Cardoso-Vasquez is a Program Director at The Llano Grande Center for Research and Development, a small non-profit that works with youth and community on issues of education in South Texas. Olga graduated from Edcouch-Elsa High School in 2001 and was highly influenced and mentored by the leaders of Llano Grande. When she left home to attend Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, Olga knew that she would return home to invest her talents and skills in improving the local community and expanding educational opportunities for young people. As planned, Olga returned home upon graduation in 2005 and has been serving her community since then.

Fabiola Carrión is the broadband policy specialist at the Progressive States Network. Before joining PSN, Fabiola worked for the Advanced Communications and Policy Institute. She also clerked in the New York Supreme Court and has worked for New York Congressman Eliot E. Engel and for California State Senator Richard Polanco. She holds a B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley; a J.D. from American University; and a law degree from Universidad Alfonso X in Spain.

Edyael Casaperalta is a Program and Research Associate at the Center for Rural Strategies. Previously, Edyael was a consultant to Rural Strategies' efforts in the Gulf Coast in the fall and winter of 2006-2007. She has worked with the Llano Grande Center for Research and Development and is one of four founders of the Llano Grande Center's Spanish Language Immer-

sion Institute. She received a B.A. from Occidental College in Los Angeles and a master's degree in Latin American Studies at Ohio University in Athens.

Marlene Chavez is the Colonias Outreach Coordinator for Texas Rio-Grande Legal Aid. Marlene graduated from Edcouch-Elsa High School in 2004 and attended Kalamazoo College in Michigan, where she received her bachelor of arts degree in anthropology and sociology. Marlene is a founding member of FUERZA del Valle, a workers' center where low-wage workers and their families are empowered to pursue economic justice.

Melissa Cook joined the College of Menominee Nation in December of 2001 and is currently the Director of the Sustainable Development Institute. She earned a B.A. in history from Marquette University, and master of arts degree in history with a certificate in museum studies from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Prior to joining the College of Menominee, Melissa worked for seven years for Menominee Tribal Enterprises, the Menominee sustainably managed forest and wood products manufacturing operation. Melissa is an enrolled member of the Menominee Indian Tribe. She serves on the Board of Directors for Menominee Tribal Enterprises, as well as on the Board for the Northwoods NiiJii Enterprise Community.

John Cooper is a Program Director and Research Associate at MDC, Inc., where he focuses on civic engagement, planning for community resilience, and public policy research. John has been a visiting lecturer in the Department of City and Regional Planning at UNC Chapel Hill and currently serves on a number of boards, including The Community Home Trust (Chapel Hill, North Carolina) and the Board of Visitors for the UNC Institute for the Environment. John has degrees in economics, urban planning, and city and regional planning from Texas A & M University and the UNC Chapel Hill.

Heather Courtney has directed and produced several documentary films in-

cluding award-winners *Letters from the Other Side* and *Los Rabajadores*. With her current film, *Where Soldiers Come From*, she was a Sundance Edit and Story Lab fellow and a 2009 recipient of the prestigious United States Artists fellowship. Her films have been funded by a Fulbright Fellowship, ITVS, the Sundance Documentary Fund, the Paul Robeson Fund, and the Texas Filmmakers Production Fund. She was recently named one of Film Independent's Top 10 Filmmakers to Watch. Prior to receiving her MFA in film production, she spent eight years writing and photographing for the United Nations and several refugee and immigrant rights organizations.

Brian Dabson is the Director of the RUPRI Rural Futures Lab and Research Professor at the Harry S Truman School of Public Affairs, University of Missouri. He is also Board Chair of the RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, and a member of the Community Development Advisory Council of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. Before joining RUPRI in 2004, he was for 12 years President of CFED, the Corporation for Enterprise Development, in Washington D.C.

amalia deloney is the Grassroots Policy Director at the Center for Media Justice. Born in Guatemala, she worked for many years at the Main Street Project in Minneapolis. At CMJ, amalia uses her extensive experience for field-building, community-building, and policy advocacy. Nationally, amalia is a board member of the Indigenous Women's Network, Main Street Project, and the Media and Democracy Coalition. amalia earned her B.A. in urban studies and history from Macalester College and her J.D. with a focus on social justice from Hamline University School of Law.

Maia Enzer is the Policy Program Director at Sustainable Northwest in Portland, Oregon. Maia has a particular passion for finding and developing policy solutions related to forest restoration and community economic development, with a focus on federal lands policy. Maia serves on the Western Governors'

Association Forest Health Advisory Council, as well as an advisor to the National Rural Assembly. She holds a master's degree from the Yale University School of Forestry in Environmental Studies and a B.A. in Political Science from Union College in Schenectady, New York.

Tanya Fiddler is the executive director of Four Bands Community Fund, a Native community development financial institution (CDFI) focused on entrepreneurship and financial literacy development on the Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation located in north central South Dakota. Tanya, an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, holds a bachelor of science degree in interdisciplinary sciences from South Dakota School of Mines & Technology and has 15 years of experience working with Native organizations. Tanya is the recipient of several awards including the 2008 Bureau of Indian Affairs "Entrepreneur Advocate of the Year," the 2007 Small Business Administration "Minority Small Business Champion for South Dakota and Region VIII," and the 2007 "Visionary Leader Award for Outstanding Achievement" in recognition of her impact in the CDFI field. She received a Fellowship in the Aspen Institute's Ideas Festival in 2008 and has been an active voice in Native community and economic development. Tanya is also the Co-Chair for the Native CDFI Network and is a board member of the South Dakota Indian Business Alliance, Mazaska Owecaso Otipi Financial, and CFED.

Peggy Flanagan is an enrolled member of the White Earth Nation. She is the Director of the Native American Leadership Program and Senior Trainer at Wellstone Action. Peggy is also an adjunct professor in The George Washington University's Native American Political Leadership Program. Peggy was elected to the Minneapolis School Board in 2004 and was the first Native American and youngest individual to serve on that body. Peggy serves on the boards of several community organizations, including the Native American Community Development Institute and the Native Vote Alliance of Minnesota.

She received her degree in American Indian studies and child psychology from the University of Minnesota in 2002.

Charles W. “Chuck” Fluharty is the founder, president, and CEO of the Rural Policy Research Institute, the only national policy institute dedicated solely to assessing the rural impacts of public policy. A research professor in the Harry S Truman School of Public Affairs at the University of Missouri, and a Transatlantic Fellow with the German Marshall Fund from 2007-2011, he has authored numerous policy studies, presented dozens of Congressional testimonies, and delivered major policy addresses in over a dozen nations.

Carolyn Ford is the Executive Director and founder of the North Florida Educational Development Corporation. NFEDC is a community-based development organization that fully incorporates the comprehensive approach to community development. Serving on the former Rural LISC advisory committee, Florida Housing Coalition Board of Directors, and as former Mayor of Quincy, Chairman of the Black Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the Board of directors of Southern Partners Foundation are just a few of Carolyn’s civil activities. She has received many awards, including The Distinguished Service Award (YouthBuild USA), Fellowship Award from Bank of America Academy, Rural LISC Bootstrap Award, Dedicated Service Award to the youth of Gadsden County, and the 2007 National Alston Bannerman Award. She received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Florida A&M University and an advanced degree from Florida State University.

Dominic Fredianelli is a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom and a sophomore at Finlandia University, where he is majoring in graphic design and illustration. In 2009 he served as a driver and gunner with the Michigan National Guard in Afghanistan, where he and his fellow soldiers looked for roadside bombs. In fall 2010 he completed a 70-foot outdoor mural that was highlighted in a special exhibit at the

university, and he hopes to continue studying graffiti and other art while he pursues his art degree. He was born in the town of Hancock, in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

Roberto Gallardo has been a research associate at the Southern Rural Development Center since 2007. He recently completed his Ph.D. in public policy and administration at Mississippi State University. He has also served as data and research manager at the Center. Roberto has published a number of articles in the Daily Yonder covering topics relevant to rural areas as well as in the Economy Watch newsletter distributed to economic developers in Mississippi. He also coordinates a team evaluating comprehensive community development initiatives being implemented in the Arkansas-Mississippi Delta region.

Curt Grimm is the Carsey Institute’s deputy director and a research associate professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of New Hampshire. Formerly Curt served as senior social scientist for the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Africa Bureau. Curt earned his bachelor’s degree in anthropology and history from the University of New Hampshire and his master’s and doctorate degrees in anthropology from the State University of New York at Binghamton.

Chuck Hassebrook is Executive Director of the Center for Rural Affairs of Lyons, Nebraska. Hassebrook has served 33 years with the Center, winning changes in federal tax, farm, conservation, and rural development policy. He serves on the University of Nebraska Board of Regents and is current Chair of the Board of the USDA North Central Region Rural Development Center. Hassebrook is a University of Nebraska graduate.

Kathy Hatch is Director of Training and Technical Assistance at the Association of Programs for Independent Living (APRIL), where she coordinates the Peer Mentoring programs and is heavily involved in a number of other

APRIL projects. Prior to coming to APRIL, Kathy served the Ohio State-wide Independent Living Council as a Communications Specialist.

John A. Herrera is Senior Vice President for Latino/Hispanics Affairs at Self-Help, a community development lender. An immigrant from Costa Rica, Herrera is the cofounder of several non-profit organizations, including the Latino Community Credit Union, the second fastest growing credit union in the nation. Herrera holds a B.S. degree in general agriculture from the University of Delaware and a M.S. in parks & recreation from North Carolina State University.

Peter Hille is the Director of the Brushy Fork Institute at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. Peter has led the creation of successful new programs at Brushy Fork, facilitated strategic planning processes for organizations and communities, and designed and led workshops, retreats, and conferences for local, regional and national organizations. A 1977 graduate of Swarthmore College, his background includes experience in grassroots environmental organizing and small business management.

Elise Hoben is Program Vice President of Rural LISC. She serves on the National Senior Management Committee, the National LISC Credit Committee, and has served on the Fiscal Watch Committee, Credit Risk Review Committee, and Organizational Development Advisory Committee. Prior to joining LISC, Elise held various positions with the City of Kalamazoo and managed the Van Buren County Migrant Services Program. She holds a master’s degree in public administration and a bachelor of arts degree in political science from Western Michigan University.

Kenneth M. Johnson is senior demographer at the Carsey Institute and professor of sociology at the University of New Hampshire. He is a nationally recognized expert on demographic trends in rural and urban America. Ken

has authored a book and more than 150 articles, reports, and papers. His research has been published and reported widely and he has appeared on ABC's World News Tonight, NBC Nightly News, CNN, BBC, and National Public Radio. His research has been funded by grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, and U.S. Forest Service. Ken received his doctorate degree in sociology and demography from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and his undergraduate training at the University of Michigan.

Stan Keasling is executive director of Rural California Housing Corporation (RCHC). He has spent most of his career building RCHC and Self-Help Enterprises, holding multiple positions at both organizations as well as working as a private consultant. He has extensive experience in community and housing development.

Lisa Kilawee is the Director of Rural Health Services for Avera Health in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and works in conjunction with Avera Health leadership and staff to assist healthcare leaders and community representatives in identifying, facilitating, and supporting the development of multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional rural health programs. She has a master's of public administration from the University of South Dakota and serves as one of Avera Health's representatives to the Great Plains Network.

Jim Kleinschmit directs the Institute for Agricultural and Trade Policy's Rural Communities program. Before joining IATP in 1995, he promoted sustainable rural development in the Baltic States and Russia. He has an M.A. from the Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington-Seattle, and a B.A. from St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota.

Trista Kontz-Bartels is the eCARE Account Manager at Avera Health in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Trista works to ensure successful implementation, adaptation and long term sustainability

of eCARE product lines. Trista has a B.A. in biology from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and an MBA with health care concentration from the University of Sioux Falls.

Dylan Kruse provides assistance across multiple programs and issue areas at Sustainable Northwest, including policy, forest stewardship, communications, and general administration. Before joining the organization, he attended Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, and received a B.A. in international affairs. His work at Sustainable Northwest has linked his diverse interests of resource management, conservation, renewable energy production, and economic development.

Steph Larsen is the Assistant Director of Organizing with the Center for Rural Affairs in Lyons, Nebraska. Before coming to the Center, Steph directed the policy program at the Community Food Security Coalition in their Washington, D.C. office. Steph earned her B.S. in geology from the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire, and her master's degree in geography from UW-Madison.

Connie Loden is the Executive Director of The Economic Development Corporation of Manitowoc County, Wisconsin. Prior to joining the EDC, Connie served as CEO at the Heart of Wisconsin Business Alliance in Wisconsin Rapids. She is an entrepreneur and a Certified Economic Developer, and has received numerous awards for her involvement in community economic development projects. She serves on the board of the International Community Development Society.

Kathy Lynn is a contractor with American Forests and an adjunct researcher at the University of Oregon. Kathy is co-chair of the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition Climate Change Working Group. Kathy is also the facilitator of the Pacific Northwest Tribal Climate Change Network. She has a master's degree in community and regional planning from the University of Oregon and served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Haiti from 1996 to 1999.

Robert Mahaffey is Director of Communications and Marketing for the Rural School and Community Trust. Previously, Robert was Vice President, Communications, New American Schools; the Publisher and Communications Director, National Association of Secondary School Principals; and Vice President, External Relations, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare. He is a certified substitute teacher and has a B.S. degree in political science and English, Brigham Young University, and M.S. degree in management, University of Maryland.

Sean Taketa McLaughlin is executive director for Access Humboldt, a community media organization. He also directs the Digital Redwoods initiative to develop, deploy and adopt community broadband networks in the Redwood Coast region. Sean currently serves as Knight Media Policy Fellow with New America Foundation and formerly as a ZFellow with ZeroDivide. He was recently appointed to the California Public Utilities Commission's California Teleconnect Fund Administrative Committee. He founded and serves as spokesperson for Hawaii Consumers.

Michael F. Masterman is the founder and president of Extreme Endeavors and Consulting. He developed the company with the objective of "engaging austerity through innovation" to achieve results. Mr. Masterman has guided Extreme Endeavors to be one of the only companies in the US to support NASA Operations in Antarctica and to support the design and installation of a cave monitoring system for Hellhole, one of the most notorious caves in the US due to its shear 180 foot drop to access the cave.

John Molinaro is co-director the Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group, where he works with rural and urban communities throughout America. John holds a master's of planning and B.A. in writing. He is certified in economic and housing development finance, served as a policy fellow at the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota, and was a two-time

appointee to the Minnesota Governor's Workforce Development Council.

Tirso Moreno, a former farmworker and immigrant from Mexico, has been the General Coordinator of the Farmworker Association of Florida since its inception in 1983. Tirso is a co-founder and board member of the Farmworker Health and Safety Institute and serves on the boards of Southern Partners Fund, the Sapelo Foundation, Domestic Fair Trade Association, National Immigrant Farming Initiative, and the Rural Coalition.

Peter Morris serves as the Director of Strategy and Partnerships for the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). He has been involved in Indigenous policy, research and advocacy for over a decade – both in his home country of Australia and in the United States. Peter earned his master's degree in American Indian studies at the University of Arizona and completed his undergraduate work at the University of New South Wales. He has also worked as Director of Policy for First Nations Development Institute and Director of Scholar Recruitment at the University of Arizona. His research has been published in academic journals and he has provided advice on Indigenous policy to senior policymakers in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States.

Traci L. Morris (Chickasaw Nation) is the Director of Operations for Native Public Media, Inc. She is the principal and founder of Homahota Consulting, which provides organizations with policy analysis and research focusing on internet use, digital inclusion, network neutrality, and development of broadband networks in Indian Country.

Kathleen Moxon serves as the co-chair of the National Rural Assembly Transportation Policy Group. In addition she is the director of Redwood Coast Rural Action. Prior to that she served as Director of Community Strategies and Chief Administrative Officer of Humboldt Area Foundation. Kathleen currently serves on the Boards

of Garfield School District, Open Door Health Clinics, and Redwood Forest Foundation, Inc. She has been a speaker or panelist presenting on rural economic and community development for many groups across the nation.

Ari Neuman is Director of Policy Development and Applied Research at the Rural Community Assistance Partnership. He has a B.A. in American Studies from Stanford University with a concentration in American environmental policy and a J.D. from the University of Washington School of Law in Seattle. Prior to joining RCAP, he served as a legal intern for U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and at the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington, D.C.

Julia Olmstead joined the Institute for Agricultural and Trade Policy in 2009. She was formerly a graduate fellow with the Land Institute in Salina, Kansas, and has a master's degree in journalism from the University of California, Berkeley, an M.S. in plant breeding and sustainable agriculture from Iowa State University, and a B.A. in botany and Spanish from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Richard Oswald is a fifth generation Missouri family farmer who lives on the farm where he was born, situated in the Missouri River Valley near Langdon. The Oswald's grow food corn, seed soybeans, and cattle. Richard also writes a weekly column for DTN/Progressive Farmer and contributes regularly to rural online news journal, the Daily Yonder. Richard is a Missouri Master Farmer for 2010, president of Missouri Farmers Union, and serves as a director of Organization for Competitive Markets.

Delia Perez is Associate Director of the Llano Grande Center for Research and Development, a nonprofit organization along the Texas-Mexico border that engages youth and adults in developing new alliances to revitalize communities and expand educational opportunities. Delia has been involved with Llano Grande since the organization was

founded in 1997. She currently manages daily operations, works directly with youth and teachers, and represents Llano Grande in its local and national partnerships to advance policy and practice in the areas of youth development, community development, and education reform.

Ronald L. Phillips is president and founder of Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI), a nonprofit community development corporation and community development financial institution based in Wiscasset, Maine. Ron was selected by the James A. Johnson Fannie Mae fellowship for the class of 2002. He's served on numerous boards such as the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston and currently is on the national board of LISC and Rural LISC advisory board, and the Federal Reserve Bank Board of Governors Consumer Advisory Council. He is a graduate of Boston University with a B.A. in comparative literature; a master of divinity from Union Theological Seminary in New York; and Harvard Business School's Advanced Management Program AMP.

Kim Phinney is YouthBuild USA's Director of Rural and Tribal Development. She has worked with numerous rural community-based organizations and CDCs for the last 20 years. In addition, she served as the Executive Director of the Rape Crisis Center of Vermont and the Director of Project Self-Sufficiency. She completed her undergraduate work at Bates College and her graduate work in public policy at Tufts University. Kim grew up in rural Maine and lives and works in northern Vermont.

Mimi Pickering is an award-winning filmmaker with Appalshop, a media arts and education center in Kentucky's Appalachian coalfields. She directs Appalshop's Community Media Initiative, which provides community media training and assistance in developing and implementing communication strategies in support of policy change and social justice organizing. Mimi currently is working with young women from eastern Kentucky to create and distrib-

ute media telling their stories about reproductive health issues in the region, and collaborating with WMMT-FM on a multi-media project exploring alternative economic options for the coalfields. Pickering serves as the lead trainer for the PlaceStories digital storytelling program.

Taylor Ptacek is an intern at the Avera Center for Public Policy in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She has spent the last year in detailed analysis of the Affordable Care Act and its impact. In May Taylor received her master of public administration degree from the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. In the fall, she will begin law school at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Josie Raphaelito is the Program Coordinator for the Center for Native American Youth at The Aspen Institute. Josie most recently graduated with a master's in public health from The George Washington University. She has interned at both the National Congress of American Indians and the National Indian Health Board. Josie is an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation.

Steven Renderos leads Main Street Project's media justice and community building efforts, including the Minnesota Digital Justice Coalition and collaborative work with the nationwide Media Action Grassroots Network (MAG-Net). Prior to joining Main Street Project, Steven served as Project Coordinator of the Minnesotano Media Empowerment Project, an initiative of the Department of Chicano Studies at the University of Minnesota. He currently serves on the boards of Organizing Apprenticeship Project, La Asamble de Derechos Civiles, and Center for Media Justice.

Charlotte Golar Richie is the YouthBuild USA Senior Vice President for Public Policy, Advocacy, and Government Relations. She has served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives and as cabinet chief of housing and director of the Department

of Neighborhood Development for the city of Boston. She most recently was senior advisor for federal, state, and community affairs in Gov. Patrick's administration. Charlotte is a graduate of Rutgers University (B.A.), Columbia University (M.S. in journalism), and Suffolk University's Sawyer School of Management (M.B.A.).

Niel Ritchie directs the League of Rural Voters. Prior to that, he served as a policy analyst and national organizer at the Minneapolis-based Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. He is the author of numerous articles and op/eds on food, farm, health care and rural economic policy. Niel currently serves on the board of directors for the Rural Community Assistance Partnership, the Alliance for Aviation Across America, and Main Street Project.

Sandy Rosenblith is a consultant and coordinates Stand Up for Rural America, a grassroots education and advocacy campaign housed with the Center for Rural Strategies. Over her career, Sandy has been a trainer, technical assistance provider, housing, business and program packager and underwriter, consultant advisor, regulatory attorney, intermediary program director, underwriter and manager, writer, and editor.

Martha Sanchez is the Community Organizing Coordinator at La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE). Martha grew up in Cardenas, Mexico, and came to McAllen, Texas, at age 16, working for several years as a housekeeper and domestic worker while she learned English and navigated life in the U.S. as an undocumented immigrant. She guides LUPE's team of community organizers as they work in the colonias to identify and develop indigenous leadership and their ability to mobilize their friends and neighbors around local issues.

Connie Stewart is Executive Director of the California Center for Rural Policy at Humboldt State University. Connie is a former Mayor of Arcata and was a member of the city council from 1996 to 2004. She previously worked as

Senior Field Representative to Assemblywoman Patty Berg in Humboldt, Del Norte, and Trinity counties.

Robert Stewart is Executive Director of the Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP). Formerly, Robert was the Executive Director for the Texas Water Utilities Association, was employed at the Texas Rural Water Association, and served as Texas Director for Community Resource Group, the Southern RCAP. He holds a B.A. and a master of public affairs from the University of Texas at Austin.

Amy Sterndale is Communications Director at the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire. She is also an MBA student and past board member of several local non-profits. Prior to joining the Carsey Institute, Amy worked at Random House, Inc. Later at Arcadia Publishing, she managed a team creating photographic histories of rural towns and urban neighborhoods throughout the northeastern United States.

Nancy Straw is President/CEO of the West Central Initiative. She previously worked as a business consultant, small business owner, and in a variety of management positions in nonprofit and private organizations. Nancy grew up in rural Minnesota, has dedicated her career to helping rural families, businesses, and communities, and has served on numerous nonprofit and governmental boards and committees. She serves on the Council of Foundation's Community Foundation Leadership Team and completed the Stanford Graduate School of Business Executive Program for Philanthropy Leaders.

Stephen Sugg co-founded Truman LaCombe LLC, a consulting firm providing "capacity for social and environmental entrepreneurs." Prior to Truman LaCombe, Stephen worked as a Senior Policy Officer at Local Initiatives Support Corporation. He also served as a Legislative Assistant to United States Senator Jean Carnahan. Stephen is an adjunct faculty member at St. Leo

University and Tidewater Community College. He earned a M.S. in rural sociology at the University of Missouri.

Adam Warthesen serves as lead organizer for the Land Stewardship Project's work on federal farm policy. Warthesen started working with LSP in 2001 while completing his degree in Environmental Studies and Public Policy at Bemidji State University. Duties include member organizing activities, congressional and administrative outreach, and public relations and policy analysis. Adam serves on MN NRCS State Technical Committee and the CSP Subcommittee and assumed the role of lead federal policy organizer, working directly with and staffing LSP's Federal Farm Policy Committee, in 2006.

Thomas M. Watson is the Executive Director of Rural Support Partners (RSP). Before starting RSP, Thomas directed the Grassroots Support Project at the Southern Rural Development Initiative. He came to SRDI after working as a Senior Program Consultant with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and, before that, Thomas co-founded the Center for Participatory Change in Asheville, North Carolina and served as Co-Executive Director for five years. Thomas received his master of social work from UNC-Chapel Hill and a B.S. in business management from Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Carol Werner serves as Executive Director of the Environmental and Energy Study Institute in Washington, D.C. Before joining EESI in late 1987 as director of its Energy & Climate Change Program, she served as the legislative director of the Northeast-Midwest Congressional Coalition, the legislative representative for the National Consumer Law Center, and as a legislative assistant to Rep. Neal Smith (D-Iowa). Carol serves on a number of national boards and committees related to energy. She holds a B.A. from Morningside College and completed graduate work at George Washington University.

Alfonzo White serves as Executive Director of Action Communication and Education Reform (ACER) in Duck Hill, Mississippi. With over 30 years of experience in community organizing and accurately documenting history with his expertise in video documentation and capturing the "real stories" (oral histories and events) throughout the South, Al has developed an archive of documentation that can be used for "best practices in community organizing" to fulfill the vision in communities to help make decisions and implement the policies for social change.

Emily White Hat is a program manager with the Policy Research Center at the National Congress of American Indians, located in Washington D.C., and is an enrolled member of the Sicangu Lakota/Rosebud Sioux Tribe. She works on a variety of projects including: a Native American Research Centers for Health (NARCH) V study of Community-Based Participatory Research; implementation of the Tribal Law and Order Act; and the Policy Center's tribally-driven research agenda. She received her juris doctor and a Natural Resources Law Certificate from the University of New Mexico School of Law.

John White is Deputy Assistant Secretary for Rural Outreach, United States Department of Education. He came to the Department after serving as the Chief Communications Officer for Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland. John has held communications positions in the public and private sectors and began his career as a newspaper journalist.

Doris Terry Williams is Executive Director of the Rural School and Community Trust. Williams was previously an Assistant Dean and Associate Professor at North Carolina Central University. She founded and directed the NC Center for the Study of Black History (a major civil rights archives, now part of the UNC-Chapel Hill Southern History Collection), and a 100,000-watt public radio station, WVSP. She

is currently on the Board of Trustees of Vance-Granville Community College in Henderson, North Carolina, and the US Commission on Educational Equity and Excellence. She holds a doctorate from North Carolina State University and an undergraduate degree from Duke University.

Jeff Yost is the President and CEO of the Nebraska Community Foundation. In 2009 Yost provided Congressional testimony on innovative approaches to rural development. He serves on the CF Leads Board of Directors, is past chair of the Council on Foundations' CEO Network, and served on the National Task Force on Community Leadership. Prior to joining NCF, Yost served as a policy advisor to Nebraska Governor Ben Nelson.

2011 Gathering Production Team

Whitney Kimball Coe serves as coordinator of the National Rural Assembly for the Center for Rural Strategies. Before joining the Rural Strategies staff, Whitney served as assistant editor of *Appalachian Journal*. She has a master's degree in Appalachian studies from Appalachian State University.

Marty Newell is Chief Operating Officer for the Center for Rural Strategies and was a founding member of Appalshop at age 17. He has served as an executive director of the Kentucky Arts Council, general manager of Austin (Texas) Community Television, and development director for the Connecticut Food Bank.

Katharine Pearson Criss is Vice President of the Center for Rural Strategies. Previously, she served as the Ford Foundations' representative for East Africa. She was the founding executive director of the East Tennessee Foundation and is also former president of Appalshop. Katharine holds a master's in theater from the University of Tennessee.

Tim Marema is Vice President at the Center for Rural Strategies, a former daily newspaper journalist, and former development director of Appalshop. Tim holds a master's degree in journalism from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Teresa Collins is the Operations Coordinator for the Center for Rural Strategies and worked as a community organizer for Kentuckians for the Commonwealth for more than six years. She also has worked as the administrator and fundraiser for Mountain Montessori Preschool in Whitesburg, Kentucky.

Shawn Poynter has worked as a photojournalist at newspapers across the country. He joined the Center for Rural Strategies in 2002 as a communications associate, and has gone on to develop photography and photo archive projects for Rural Strategies.

Edyael Casaperalta, Center for Rural Strategies (*see bio on page 15*).

Bobby Hall is an intern at the Center for Rural Strategies. He currently is pursuing a master of public administration degree from Cornell University.

Peter Hille, Brushy Fork Institute (*see bio on page 17*).

Donna Morgan is Associate Director at Brushy Fork Institute in Berea, Kentucky. She has 16 years of experience in leadership and community development and communications. Donna has also managed a web-based training and communications effort for Communities by Choice, a national network of communities committed to practicing sustainable development.

Joel Cohen is President of Semaphore Media in Chicago, Illinois, and is the Co-Creator and Co-Executive Producer of Check, Please!, an online collection of video restaurant reviews in the Chicago area.

Ada Smith is from Whitesburg, KY in the coalfields of Appalachia. She is 24 years old and a graduate of Hampshire College. She is currently the Program Coordinator at Appalshop's Appalachian Media Institute and a founding member of the Appalachian youth regional network, the STAY Project.

Mimi Pickering, Appalshop (*see bio on page 19*).

Feral Arts is a leading community cultural development company and social enterprise based in Brisbane, Australia. Feral Arts developed the PlaceStories software used by members of the National Rural Assembly. Executive Director Sarah Moynihan serves on the board of the Center for Rural Strategies.

Paul Queck is a freelance writer with more than 30 years of writing, editing, and public relations experience in rural and farm issues.

Adam Brueggemann is Program Manager for the Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI). Prior to joining IEI, Brueggemann worked as a capital budget analyst for the N.C. Office of State Budget and Management and as a land use planner in Maryland and Virginia. He earned a master's of public administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

John Cooper, MDC, Inc. (*see bio on page 16*).

Betsey Russell is owner of Last Word, LLC, a nonprofit-serving communications and marketing firm based in Asheville, North Carolina.

*With special thanks to the local Host Committee and **Pablo Jones**, Pablo Jones Event Planning Services.*

Rural Strategies thanks the members of the Rural Policy Action Partnership: Institute for Emerging Issues, MDC, Inc., and Innovation Network for Communities.

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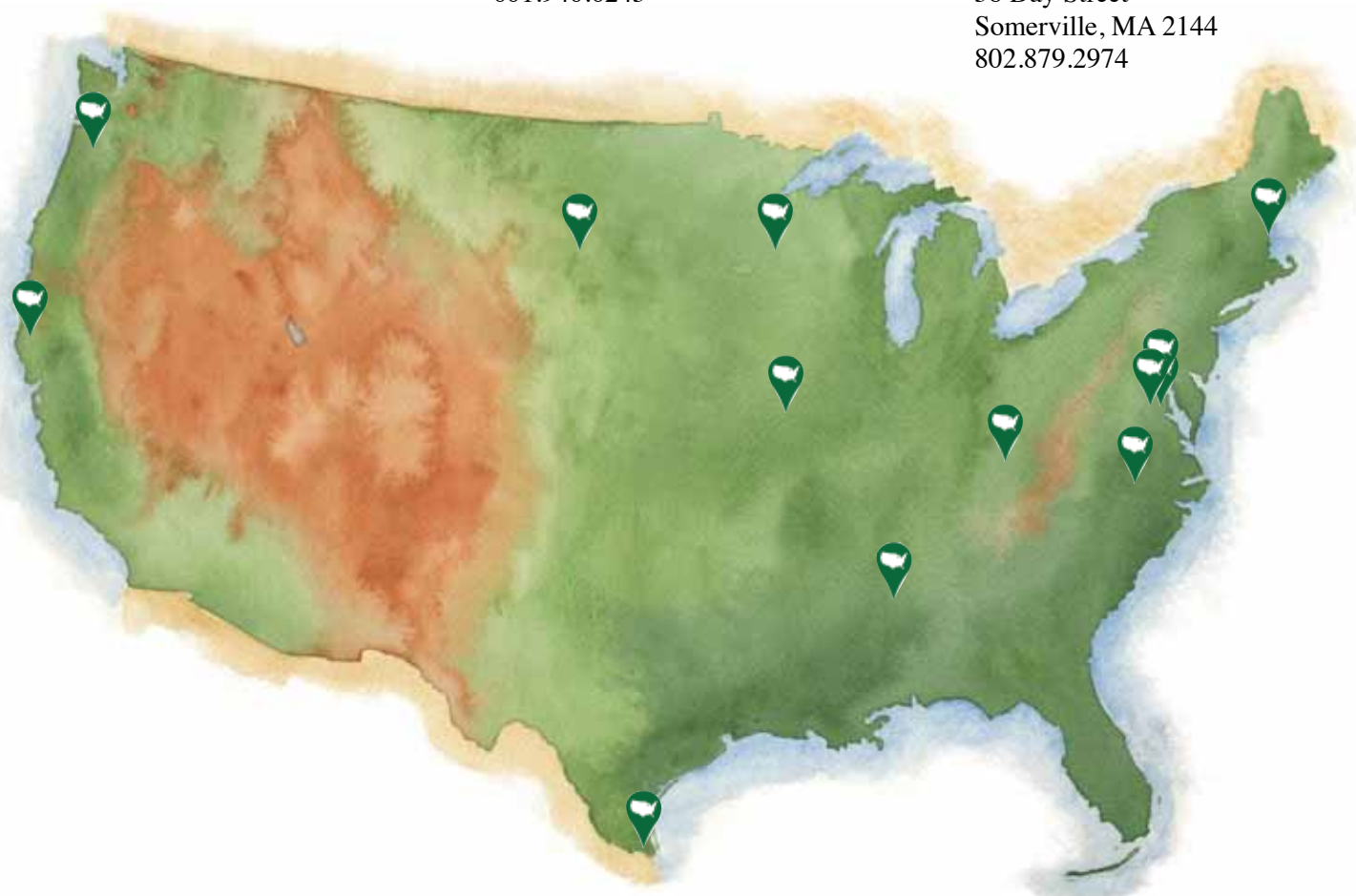
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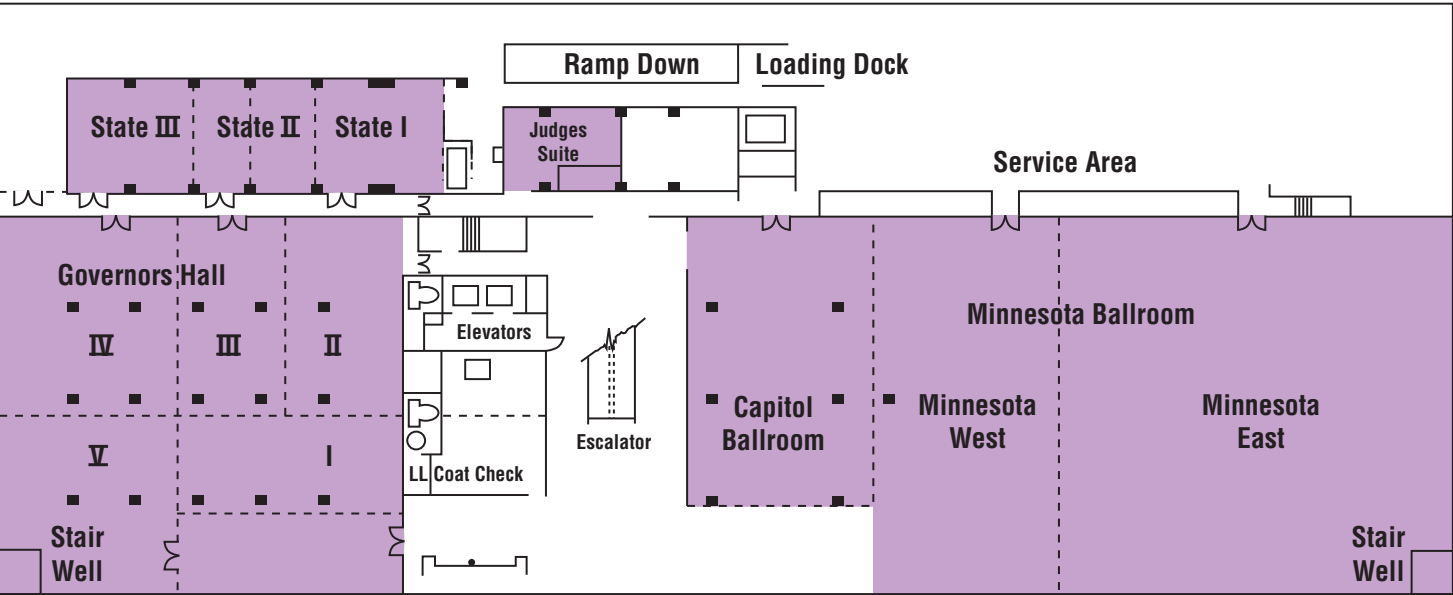
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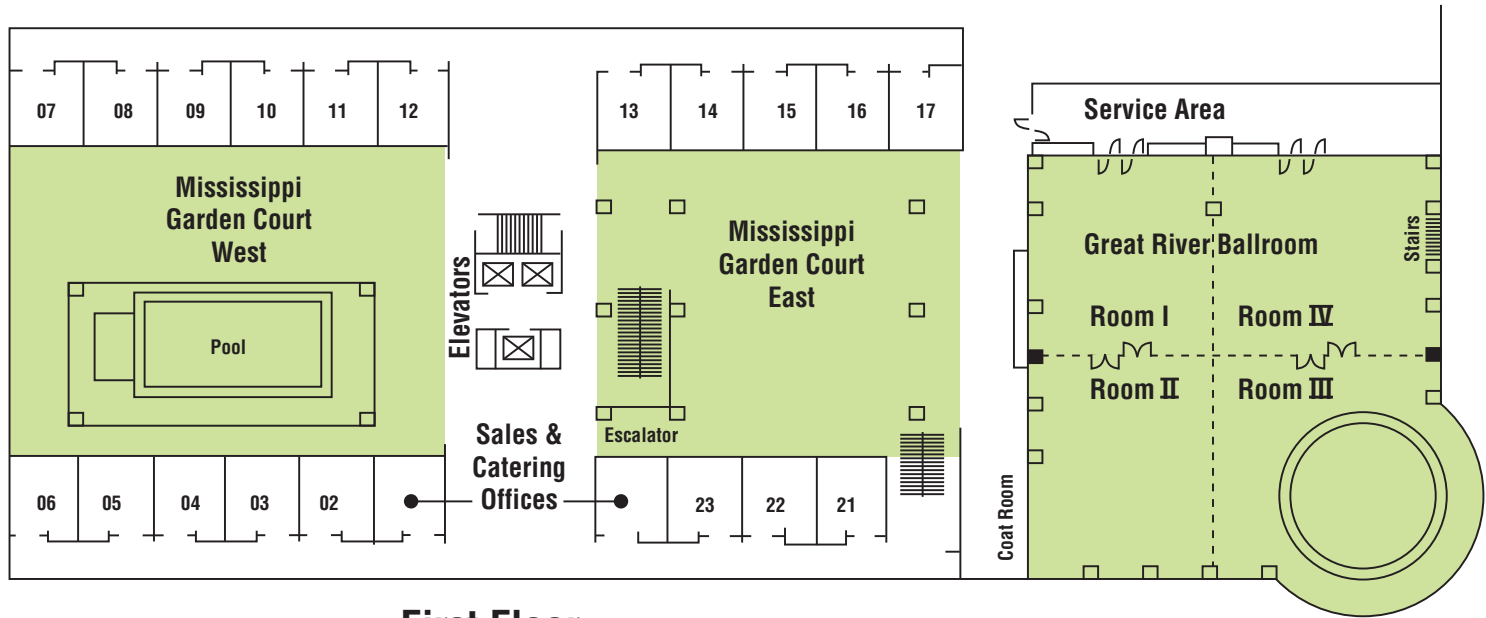
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Hotel Floor Plan



Lower Level



First Floor

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