



Regions Connecting
for Rural Innovation
a united states department of agriculture program



2010 Southern Region Convening

Program Summary

Connecting Regional Partners through Network Collaboration

*Harris Conference Center
Charlotte, North Carolina
May 11 and 12, 2010*

The purpose of the Southern Region Convening is to establish stronger partnerships with key participants at cross state and regional level and to encourage communities to work together at the regional level. The deliverables are expected to strengthen regional partnership building, to improve regional collaboration and to enhance rural policy program delivery, the number of regional strategies actions successfully implemented, and focus on the economy in multi-county regional collaboration and strategic planning.

Target:

- State Rural Development Council's
- Regional Rural Development Centers
- USDA Rural Development State Directors
- Representatives from all levels of government
- Education/colleges, universities and the community college system
- Resource Conservation & Development Councils
- Economic Development & Planning Districts
- All relevant local, state and national rural service and development institutions

Program Tracks:

Economic Development – Education & Skills for Job Creation

Workforce Development – Rethinking Skill Development for Markets

Energy: Advancing Efficiency, Generation for Fuel Development

Broadband: Global Opportunities & Rural Lifestyles

Issues:

- How we work together to set strategic directions?
- How should we define rural regions for the future—locally and nationally?
- How do we build regional networks and communication structure?
- How do we advance rural program and policy coordination cross states and cross regions?
- The program will address the current rural economy by bringing together the four topics and describing their relationship and importance to rural development. The Track discussion will be directed to setting regional development strategies around the core areas of content planning. Concurrent sessions over the two day convening will engage discussion by expert presentation, model stories and dialogue to establish the direction for partnership implementation.
- Innovative leaders at the community, state and regional level with inspiring stories will model directions to provide the keys toward potential regional actions.
- The Convening will conclude with established reports from each of the four work groups. Prioritizing regional efforts around, follow-up, action steps, conference report out, and communication.

Summit Objectives:

- Address issues with a bi-state and regional strategy
- Promote the creation of new partnerships and regional collaboration
- Enable regions to share “best practices”
- Focus on utilizing regional partnerships to enhance rural program planning and delivery and shaping economic development policy

Summit Deliverables:

- Strengthen Regional Partnership Building (3 in next 12 months)
- Improve Regional Collaboration (3 in next 12 months)
- Enhance the number of strategies, actions and policy programs implemented by focusing on the economy in bi-state, multi-county regional collaboration and strategic planning. (1 in next 12 months)

