

17th Annual Conference

Rural Community Economic Development:
Looking to the Future

Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs-Western Illinois University
in conjunction with

Rural Partners®

and

Governor's Rural Affairs Council

Chaired by Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn

present

What will it take for Illinois' rural communities to position themselves for the future? What is happening at the state and Federal level that will impact rural Illinois? How do Information Technology, TIF districts, community foundations, and non-profit organizations fit into a development strategy? How do rural communities create jobs for their residents? These issues and more will be examined at the 17th Annual Rural Community Development Conference. Experts from across the country will share innovative practices, techniques, and tools that participants can apply and use in their own communities.

Holiday Inn City Centre
Peoria, Illinois

March 8 and 9, 2006



17th Annual Conference

Rural Community Economic Development: *Looking to the Future*

Rural Illinois faces both challenges and opportunities and leaders must be able to take advantage of the tools and strategies available today. Not only must the problems of today be solved, communities must be positioned for the future.

The 17th annual conference focuses on rural community development strategies that will do just that. Lt. Governor Pat Quinn will open the conference by discussing the issues important to rural areas in 2006. The plenary session describes regional entrepreneurship strategies, third party logistics, and information technology as ways to “jump start” a region’s economy.

Concurrent sessions cover topics vitally important in today’s environment. Marketing, managing non-profits, downtown development, community foundations, and regional development will be addressed by nationally recognized experts. Other sessions will feature small rural communities with successful community development projects including TIF projects, tourism, and information technology. Of special interest are the many opportunities to meet professionals from state and Federal agencies and from other communities and expand your network of contacts.

The IIRA MAPPING the Future of Your Community program will celebrate its 15th anniversary. You are invited to a reception honoring this milestone on Wednesday, March 8 after the light dinner. The conference is expected to attract a large number of attendees and I encourage you to register by February 20 to receive a lower registration rate. I look forward to seeing you in Peoria on March 8 and 9.

Norman Walzer
Professor of Economics

Conference Highlights

Rural Illinois is faced with an environment that is not only more complex but is changing at an unprecedented rate; however, rural leaders have access to more tools and strategies than ever. The challenge for rural leaders is to understand which strategies are best for addressing the needs of the communities they serve.

Many communities are looking to entrepreneurship to grow their economies. Illinois has been fortunate in that it has invested in an Entrepreneurship Network to help businesses prosper. Additional innovative strategies that can complement the approach are being used in Illinois and other states. Three sessions focus on these approaches.

Information Technology (IT) has great potential for improving rural economies; however, leaders must invest their time and resources in productive ways. Three sessions discuss how IT can best be used. Third Party Logistics also seems to be especially suited to rural communities and this important topic is addressed.

Other sessions cover additional topics of interest to rural communities including community foundations, non-profits, and TIFs. Enhancing downtowns and effective marketing will also be discussed. Conference participants will hear from state and Federal agencies about changes in existing programs and new programs available to rural leaders.

Rural Community Economic Development: *Looking to the Future*

Tuesday, March 7, 2006

7:00- 9:00 p.m.

Reception (Cash Bar) and Conference Preregistration

Wednesday, March 8, 2006

8:00- 9:00 a.m. Registration

9:00-10:15 a.m. Rural Illinois in the Future

Moderator: Norman Walzer

Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs

“Issues for Rural Illinois in 2006”

Honorable Pat Quinn, Lieutenant Governor

Chair, Governor’s Rural Affairs Council

“Entrepreneurship Strategies with a ‘Regional Flavor’”

June Holley, ACENet

10:15-10:45 a.m. Break

10:45-12:00 Noon Rural Illinois in the Future (continued)

Moderator: Christopher Merrett

Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs

“3PL: New Focus in Economic Development”

Libby Ogard, Prime Focus, LLC

“Why You Should Care About IT”

Ed Feser, University of Illinois, Urbana

**12:00-1:15 p.m. Lunch and Annual Meeting of
Rural Partners**

Chair: Don Forrest

Rural Partners

**1:30- 2:10 p.m. Successful Community Development
2:20- 3:00 p.m. Strategies**

(6 concurrent sessions, repeated so that participants can attend two sessions)

“Working with the Economic Development Administration
in a New Era”

C. Robert Sawyer, director, Chicago Region, EDA

“Making Your Region More Entrepreneurship Ready”

June Holley, ACENet

“Economic Development and Sustainability: Resolving the Difference”

Janet Ayres, Purdue University

“Rural Partners: Community Development and Economic Growth
Through Homeownership”

Kay Gregg, Rural Partners

“Logistics as a Local Development Strategy”

Libby Ogard, Prime Focus, LLC

“Getting Started in Information Technology: Panel

Ed Feser, University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign

3:00- 3:30 p.m. Networking Break

3:30- 4:10 p.m. Innovative Practices in Communities

4:20- 5:00 p.m.

(6 concurrent sessions, repeated so that participants can attend two sessions)

“Community Tourism: Madison, Indiana”

John Staicer, Historic Madison, Inc.

“New Options for Financing Rural Community Investments,
Services, and Products”

Harry Pestine, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago

“TIF and Small Town Renewal: Lacon, Illinois”

Steve Kline, Economic Development Group

Mike Hiell, Mayor, Lacon

“Bringing Broad Band to Rural Communities: Princeton, Illinois”

Jason Bird, Supt. of Electric and Telecommunications, Princeton

“Designing and Implementing a Successful Marketing Program”

Clark Gyure, Gyure and Associates

“Regional Approaches to Rural Development”

Jack Geller, Center for Rural Policy and Development

**7:00- 8:30 p.m. MAPPING the Future of Your Community
15th Anniversary Dessert Reception**

Thursday, March 9, 2006

7:30- 8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast

**8:30-10:00 a.m. Workshops on Community and
10:30-12:00 noon Economic Development**

(5 concurrent sessions, repeated so that participants can attend two sessions)

“Starting and Managing Successful Non-profits”
Steven Jeanetta, University of Missouri-Columbia

“Starting a Successful Community Foundation”
Sheri Hink, Nebraska Community Foundation

“Growing Home-Based Businesses”
Glenn Muske, Oklahoma State University

“Financing Local Development Programs”
Panel of Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity,
U.S. Economic Development Administration, Office of the
Treasurer, USDA-Rural Development, Illinois EPA, and Illinois
Finance Authority.

“Enhancing Downtown as a Sense of Place”
Kent Robertson, St. Cloud State University

10:00-10:30 Networking Break

12:00 Noon Adjourn

Conference Sponsors

Governor's Rural Affairs Council
Western Illinois University
Small Business Development Center
Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
Ameren Services
Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs
Tom Jacobs & Associates
The Economic Development Group

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Illinois Housing Development Authority
Illinois Rural Health Association
The Economic Development Group Ltd.
Verizon

Registration

Registrations postmarked by February 20, 2006, will be at the Early Bird rate of \$140.00 per person. Registrations postmarked after that date and at the door will be \$150.00. The registration fee includes lunch and a “light dinner” on Wednesday, March 8, a continental breakfast on Thursday, March 9, and breaks on both days. **The registration deadline is Wednesday, March 1, 2006.** To register, return your completed registration form and payment to:

Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs Fax: (309) 298-2142
Stipes Hall 518
Western Illinois University
1 University Circle
Macomb, IL 61455-1390

Checks, money orders, vouchers, or purchase orders should be made payable to the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs. WIU/FEIN number: 37-0910458. **Online credit card registration will be available at www.IIRA.org/news/events.asp on January 23, 2006.**

Location

Holiday Inn City Centre, 500 Hamilton Blvd., Peoria, IL 61602.
Telephone number (309) 674-2500.

Lodging

Rooms at reduced rates have been set aside for conference participants at the Holiday Inn City Centre. Rates per night are single (\$69) or double (\$79). All rooms are subject to availability; to receive this rate, reservations must be made by **February 20, 2006**. For reservations, phone the Holiday Inn City Centre at (800) 474-2501. Reserve early and be sure to ask for the special Rural Community Economic Development Conference rate.

Parking

Parking is available at the Holiday Inn City Centre for guests staying at the hotel. Guests driving vans should call ahead to ensure that they meet garage height restrictions. Parking is also available at several nearby garages. Call the hotel at (800) 474-2501 for more information.

Questions?

Call Carol Harper at (309) 298-2637, or toll free at (800) 526-9943, or send e-mail to: CS-Harper@wiu.edu.

The announcement and program are also available on our Web site: www.IIRA.org.