



INSTITUTE FOR AGRICULTURE AND TRADE POLICY

PRESS RELEASE

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About IATP

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems. IATP is headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota with an office in Geneva.

Midwest Rural Assembly to bring together community and government leaders

Participants talk strategies for rural prosperity

MINNEAPOLIS – Rural community leaders and government officials will gather at the 2010 Midwest Rural Assembly (MRA) to exchange ideas and strategies for rural prosperity.

The MRA will be held on August 16–17 in South Sioux City, Nebraska. Along with rural community leaders from throughout the region, participants will include U.S. Department of Agriculture State Rural Development Directors from Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas. Keynote speakers include South Dakota state representative Kevin Killer and Iowa State professor and writer/poet Debra Marquart.

“Rural communities have been particularly hard hit by these tough economic times,” said Jim Kleinschmit, director of IATP’s Rural Communities program. “But there’s also a lot of innovation, energy and ideas coming out of our small towns. This is an opportunity for rural leaders and government representatives to learn about what’s working, and as importantly, how we can join together to face many of our common challenges.”

A special area of focus is to identify strategies to attract and retain young people in rural communities. Young rural leaders from Minnesota, Montana, Wisconsin and Kansas will share their priorities. Other leaders will discuss successful examples of increasing rural prosperity through cooperative business models, sustainable energy, local food systems, green job creation, rural teacher training, microenterprise programs, integration of immigrants, rural infrastructure projects and more. Policy discussions will cover federal health care reform, farm policy and broadband policy.

In addition to IATP, coordinating organizations include: Avera Rural Health Institute, Center for Rural Affairs, Center for Rural Policy and Development, Center for Rural Strategies, Dakota Rural Action, Great Plains Rural Policy Network, Heartland Center for Leadership Development, Iowa Policy Project, League of Rural Voters, Meadowlark Institute, National Rural Assembly, National Wildlife Federation, Nebraska Housing Developers Association, North Central Regional Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education,

Renewing the Countryside, Rural Learning Center, Rural Policy Research Institute, South Dakota Rural Enterprise, Inc., and West Central Initiative.

The MRA will be held at the Marina Inn Conference Center in South Sioux City, Nebraska. Registrants will receive a special MRA rate if rooms are booked before August 2. To register, and read the full agenda and speakers list, go to www.midwestruralassembly.org.

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