

*NOTE FROM THE HAGSTROM REPORT:  
This list of White House Rural Council events  
has been excerpted from a White House news release issued today  
on the “Jobs and Economic Security for Rural America” report.*

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**The White House  
Office of the Press Secretary**

For Immediate Release  
August 12, 2011

**White House Rural Council Delivers Report on Rural America –  
Jobs and Economic Security for Rural America**

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[excerpted]

The White House Rural Economic Forum is just one part of a series of more than 100 events held across the country this summer with senior Administration officials to advance the Council’s objectives. Here are just some of the past and upcoming travel and events related to the White House Rural Council:

**ALASKA**

**HHS:** On August 29, Secretary Sebelius will travel to Alaska, where she will visit several remote towns and villages to highlight the rural health and human services needs of tribal populations. The Secretary’s Alaska visit includes stops in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Anaktuvuk Pass, Barrow, and Tanana.

**DOI:** From August 6-13, Secretary Salazar traveled to Alaska for a series of meetings, roundtables with business and Native leaders, and tours of key sites pertaining to energy, conservation, and Native Alaskan issues. In Anchorage, Secretary Salazar met with business leaders in Anchorage to discuss the need for safe and responsible development of Alaska’s energy resources. In Fairbanks, Secretary Salazar toured the Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service firefighting facilities with Sens. Murkowski and Reed. In Alaska’s North Slope region, Secretary Salazar visited an Indian Health Services funded hospital currently under construction in Barrow – the northernmost community in the United States – as well as the Denali National Park, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.

**CALIFORNIA:**

**USTR:** On August 18, Ambassador Kirk will tour the processing facilities of Blue Diamond Growers, located in downtown Sacramento. There he will observe each step of almond processing from delivery to shipping. Now 101

years old, Blue Diamond is the world's largest and most respected almond processing and marketing cooperative. Blue Diamond's membership includes approximately 3,000 California almond producers, who grow 1.5 billion pounds of almonds, valued at \$2 billion, every year. California growers produce more than 80% of the total world almond supply, and nearly 70% of the almonds processed by Blue Diamond are marketed and sold to customers in over 90 countries. Following the tour, Ambassador Kirk will participate in a roundtable discussion with California Secretary of Agriculture Karen Ross and California agriculture industry leaders.

#### **FLORIDA:**

**USDA: On August 11, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack will tour the INEOS New Planet BioEnergy facility in Vero Beach, FL. The facility** is receiving a loan guarantee from USDA Rural Development to help build and operate a biorefinery capable of producing 8 million gallons per year of cellulosic ethanol and 6 megawatts of electricity. While at INEOS, the Secretary will announce a series of joint USDA and Department of Energy grants to spur research into improving the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of growing biofuel and bioenergy crops.

#### **ILLINOIS:**

**DOT:** On August 19, Secretary LaHood will visit the Illinois State Fair, where he will hold a roundtable meeting with rural farm and business leaders from central Illinois. While there, he will highlight the agency's commitment to new transportation regulations for farmers, and to continuing common sense agricultural exemptions to trucking and heavy equipment rules. Secretary LaHood will also discuss the importance of road, bridge, rail and port investments to growing our agricultural economy and expanding exports.

#### **IOWA**

**USDA:** On August 19, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack will hold a Rural Forum at the Iowa State Fair with businesses and community leaders, farmers, ranchers, and Tribal leaders to explore ways federal, state, and local officials can work together to improve economic conditions and create jobs. As chair of the White House Rural Council, Secretary Vilsack is exploring ways to strengthen economic conditions, create jobs, promote innovation and improve access to essential community services in rural America.

**VA:** On September 1, Secretary Shinseki will host a rural roundtable in Des Moines. The event will include a roundtable discussion to listen to local concerns and highlight the Department of Veterans Affairs' efforts to expand access to VA care, benefits, and services in rural America. VA has placed 12 community-based outpatient clinics throughout the state and established tele-health services aimed at meeting the needs of rural veterans.

#### **MARYLAND:**

**USDA:** On July 21, Secretary Vilsack and Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Buddy Hance held a rural roundtable during Maryland Ag Day in Annapolis. The Secretary met with Maryland businesses leaders, farmers and ranchers to explore ways federal, state, and local officials can work together to improve economic conditions and create jobs in Annapolis, MD.

#### **MINNESOTA**

**VA:** On August 31, Secretary Shinseki will go to St. Paul to attend the State Fair. The event will include a roundtable discussion to listen to local concerns and highlight the Department of Veterans Affairs' efforts to expand access to VA care, benefits, and services in rural America. VA has placed 10 community-based outpatient clinics

throughout the state and established tele-health services aimed at meeting the needs of rural veterans.

### **MISSOURI:**

**USDA:** On July 27, Secretary Vilsack gave the keynote at the Council on Foundations 2011 Rural Philanthropy Conference in Kansas City. The Secretary called on representatives of philanthropic organizations from across America to “step up, take risks and work creatively to create jobs, improve quality of life and make an impact on rural America.” During his keynote address, the Secretary urged philanthropists to partner with the Obama Administration, through the White House Rural Council to drive smart investment strategies in rural America.

**HHS:** On August 1, Secretary Sebelius visited the Learning Junction Childcare Center in Joplin, where she toured the St. John’s Mobile Medical Unit, met with Joplin officials, and hosted a discussion on mental health, child trauma, and school planning. Later in the day, the Secretary visited a Critical Access Hospital in Aurora, MO, where she met with hospital leadership and took part in a roundtable discussion on rural health issues.

### **MONTANA**

**DOI:** On July 15, Secretary Salazar hosted a rural water infrastructure event on Crow Reservation in Montana to celebrate the recently approved Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement, which will ensure safe drinking water for the reservation as well as provide for the rehabilitation of the Crow Irrigation Project. The Secretary also delivered keynote remarks at the Land Consolidation Consultation in Billings, where he discussed the importance of creating economic opportunities in rural communities through conservation and outdoor recreation. On July 16, Secretary Salazar hosted rural lands conservation and outdoor recreation events in Ovando and the Blackfoot River Valley to highlight community-based partnerships. Secretary Salazar also hosted a youth focused outdoor recreation and jobs event in Kalispell that focused on the economic impact of Glacier Park to northwest Montana.

**VA:** On July 7-8, Secretary Shinseki held three rural events in Montana. The events were held in Helena at the Montana National Guard Armory, in Bozeman at Montana State University, and in Billings at the Billings VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic. Each event included a roundtable discussion where the Secretary listened to local veterans and highlighted the Department of Veterans Affairs’ efforts to expand access to VA care, benefits, and services in rural America. Secretary Shinseki has made increased access to VA care in rural areas a top priority, and the department continues to develop new ways to reach veterans in rural parts of America. VA has placed several community-based outpatient clinics and established tele-health services throughout Montana.

### **NEBRASKA**

**VA:** On August 19, Secretary Shinseki will join Sen. Ben Nelson to host a rural roundtable near Lincoln. VA has made increased access to VA care in rural areas a top priority, and the department continues to develop new ways to reach veterans in rural parts of America. VA has placed 11 community-based outpatient clinics throughout the state and established tele-health services aimed at meeting the needs of rural veterans. Plans are underway for a new \$560 million Omaha VAMC to replace the 60-year-old hospital. The facility provides a full range of patient care services, education, and research for veterans in a 104-county area of Nebraska, western Iowa, and portions of Kansas and Missouri.

### **NEVADA**

**VA:** On August 17, Secretary Shinseki will host a rural roundtable near Las Vegas. VA has made increased access to VA care in rural areas a top priority and the department continues to develop new ways to reach Veterans in rural

parts of America. VA has placed 10 community-based outpatient clinics throughout the state and established tele-health services aimed at meeting the needs of rural veterans. VA is expanding services in the Las Vegas Area with a new comprehensive VA medical center complex nearing completion in North Las Vegas that will have a \$1.2 billion economic impact to the area and create 1,850 permanent medical jobs.

## **NEW MEXICO**

**HUD:** On August 22, Secretary Donovan will visit a hospital under construction in Rio Rancho. A \$143.4 million Section 242 mortgage insurance commitment was issued to finance the construction of the hospital in Rio Rancho, a suburb 20 miles northwest of Albuquerque. The new facility is affiliated with the University of New Mexico (UNM), UNM Hospital, the UNM Medical Group, and the UNM School of Medicine. The loan will finance a new 200,000-square foot, 68-bed state-of-the-art community teaching hospital with a high surgical case load on 20 acres of land. At an interest rate of 6.0 percent, in comparison to an unenhanced bond interest rate of 7.7 percent, FHA insurance will save the hospital \$64.7 million in interest expense over the life of the loan. The construction project will support 1,877 FTEs in its community and provide an economic stimulus of \$386.4 million during the construction period. Following construction, the completed project will directly support 445 FTEs and provide a direct annual economic benefit of \$85.8 million.

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

**DOE:** On July 25, Secretary Chu visited Celgard, an innovative and high-tech battery manufacturing company, in Concord. Celgard recently expanded their existing manufacturing facility with support from the Recovery Act to create more than 200 jobs in rural North Carolina. Celgard is one of the largest suppliers to the lithium battery industry, which are instrumental in increasing the capacity of electric drive vehicles and helping reduce our dependence on foreign oil. Afterwards, the Secretary was joined by local business leaders at the University of North Carolina – Charlotte for a roundtable discussion on the growing clean energy industry in rural communities. Like Celgard, the companies that Secretary met with are critical to our future: to pioneering and commercializing technologies that reduce our consumption of foreign oil and creating jobs and supporting economic growth.

## **NORTH DAKOTA:**

**VA:** On July 5, Secretary Shinseki held a rural event in Bismarck at the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic where he held a roundtable discussion to listen to local veterans and highlight the Department of Veterans Affairs' efforts to expand access to VA care, benefits, and services in rural America.

## **Oregon:**

**CEQ:** On August 9, White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Nancy Sutley toured a Federal-County-State funded partnership with local business and conservation groups that is creating local jobs and building a renewable energy market in John Day, Oregon. Byproducts from the U.S. Forest Service's Malheur National Forest restoration project are used by Malheur Lumber Company and Pellet Plant to create wood pellets which are in turn used to provide energy to local schools, the local hospital and John Day Airport. Malheur Lumber Company's recent expansion, financed in part by a Recovery Act grant, has allowed Grant County, Oregon to retain 6% of its private non-farm workforce. The wood pellets and bricks manufactured at Malheur Lumber will reduce energy costs by \$4.4 million across the regional economy and represent the economic opportunities presented through conservation and collaboration between governments and local communities and businesses.

## **PENNSYLVANIA**

**EPA:** On August 3, Administrator Jackson traveled to Lancaster County and visited Jeff Balmer, owner of a 60-head dairy farm that is using a variety of best management practices to protect water quality in the community and further downstream in the Chesapeake Bay. The Administrator toured Jeff's farm and he explained how these practices allowed him to prevent runoff and retain soil, making his operation more efficient and sustainable. The Administrator also participated in a roundtable discussion with around 50 area farmers and leaders about ways to protect rural air and water quality and strengthen rural economies. The Administrator pledged to continue communicating directly with farmers and other stakeholders in rural communities about the shared goals of clean air, clean water and increased economic opportunities rural America.

## **Tennessee**

**ED:** On August 10, Secretary Duncan traveled to Nashville to host a WH Rural Council roundtable discussion with several rural superintendents, school principals and business leaders, as well as Gov. Bill Haslam and state Education Commissioner Kevin Huffman, at Vanderbilt University. The conversation focused on challenges and solutions in rural schools and how the federal government could best support districts, communities and local partners to strengthen schools and increase student success. Duncan highlighted the ways education can transform rural economies and the opportunities that technology offers all students to receive a world-class education no matter where they live.

## **TEXAS:**

**USTR:** This fall, Ambassador Kirk will visit the Texas State Fair, which is celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary from September 30 to October 23. Held annually at Fair Park in Dallas, the fair proudly displays the unique scale and diversity of Texas' people and products. Millions of visitors from all 50 states and many countries around the world flock to Dallas each October to sample the best the Lone Star State has to offer in terms of food, fun, and entertainment. Featured attractions include the largest new car and truck show in the Southwest, legendary livestock exhibitions, major music concerts, and classic college football.

## **VIRGINIA**

**OSTP:** On August 5, U.S. Chief Technology Officer Aneesh Chopra visited Blacksburg to discuss rural job creation and to hear from local entrepreneurs and business leaders about ways we can partner to spur job growth in rural communities across the country. Chopra toured two local startups, made remarks at an event hosted by the Regional Technology Council, and hosted a roundtable discussion with local entrepreneurs, business leaders, and other key stakeholders.

## **WEST VIRGINIA:**

**SBA:** On July 14, Administrator Mills visited a high tech business that was named West Virginia's small business of the year in 2010. The business, Azimuth, Inc. located in Fairmount, was started by a service disabled veteran with an SBA loan and grew through SBA's 8(a) Federal Contracting Program. Azimuth is an impressive manufacturing company, creating rural jobs of the future focused on protecting our borders. It is a high technology services firm that is dedicated to quality, innovation, and performance and is a strong advocate of teaming, actively seeking to establish long term strategic alliances with both large and small firms.

## **WISCONSIN:**

**USDA:** On August 4, Secretary Vilsack held a forum at the Wisconsin State Fair with businesses and community

leaders, farmers and ranchers to explore ways federal, state, and local officials can work together to improve economic conditions and create jobs. The Secretary took questions from the audience and highlighted job creation and how agricultural trade is contributing to Wisconsin's economy.

**DOI:** On July 14, Secretary Salazar keynoted the National Wildlife System Conference, where he addressed the Obama Administration's commitment to working with ranchers, farmers and other private landowners to ensure protection of large, rural landscapes and the abundance of fish and wildlife – and announced a new initiative that will spur these collaborative efforts through community-based coalitions of private landowners, conservation groups, and state and federal agencies. The [Landscape Stewards](#) program, a partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, will leverage up to \$200,000 to support coalition-based conservation efforts beginning next year, with each grant matched by equal contributions from the coalition partners – part of President Obama's [America's Great Outdoors](#) initiative.

## **NEW ENGLAND**

**DOI:** From August 15-19, Secretary Salazar will travel to the Northeastern United States to highlight the importance of America's outdoor economy in creating jobs and discuss the economic value of conservation for communities across the country, placing an emphasis on rural areas where protecting vital habitats contributes greatly to strong local economies. The four-state tour will take Secretary Salazar and key partners in the Senate to Vermont, Rhode Island, Maine, and New Hampshire to meet with outdoor stakeholders; tour the parks, refuges, and public lands that serve as recreation destinations for tourists and travelers from around the country – helping to create jobs in the leisure and hospitality industry; participate in events that encourage youth to get outside and explore the great outdoors; and visit the retail shops and outfitters that help power this key section of our economy. The Secretary's trip will focus on discussions with leaders in Northeastern rural communities about creating economic opportunities through conservation and outdoor recreation.