



United States Department of Agriculture • Farm Service Agency  
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## JOBS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH FORUM

You are invited to attend a Community Forum on Jobs and Economic Growth led by the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and the Farm Service Agency. This gathering is designed for business leaders, educators and policy makers to share ideas on what is needed to create jobs in Ohio, specifically in rural communities. We intend to create a blueprint for directing a public policy agenda that will foster and support economic growth for our state. Please join us at this important event – your voice is important!

Date: Thursday, January 21, 2010

Time: 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Location: Ohio Department of Agriculture  
8995 E. Main Street  
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068

Facilitator: To be announced

Agenda: (See Attachments) Suggested questions to guide forum discussion

Please R.S.V.P. to Michael Jones (Rural Development) at 614-255-2394 or Christina Reed (Farm Service Agency) at 614-255-2527 or by email at [Michael.Jones@oh.usda.gov](mailto:Michael.Jones@oh.usda.gov) or [Christina.Reed@oh.usda.gov](mailto:Christina.Reed@oh.usda.gov) no later than C.O.B. on Tuesday, January 19, 2010.

## **Discussion Questions for Report**

1. From what we have discussed today, from what you have seen, or what you have seen reported about the President's Jobs Forum, and the administration's approach to job creation overall, what seems relevant to your community?
2. What parts of your local economy are working or thriving? What businesses and sectors are expanding and hiring?
3. What parts of your local economy are not working or thriving? What businesses and sectors have been hit the hardest? What are people struggling with the most?
4. What are the opportunities for growth in your community? What businesses and sectors seem poised to rebound? What do you see as the "jobs of the future"?
5. What are the obstacles to job creation in your community? What could make local businesses more likely to start hiring?
6. What other issues and ideas should the President consider?
7. Are there specific changes to USDA programs and regulations that could positively impact the development of businesses in Rural America or strengthen current businesses? What innovative ideas should USDA consider to increase economic opportunity in rural areas?

## Additional Questions to Consider During Roundtable / Forum

### **Creating Jobs by Rebuilding Infrastructure**

*How do we address the dilemma the federal government faces when it tries to use “visionary projects” such as highway, rail, aviation, and other infrastructure projects to create jobs instead of shovel ready projects such as fixing streets, rebuilding parks, and improving home energy efficiency?*

### **Green Jobs of the Future**

*What is the best way to expand public and private financing for green jobs (wind, solar, biofuel, and energy efficiency) in rural areas? How can the federal government be a better partner with local officials on creating green jobs?*

### **Small Business Growth**

*Small business is the engine of US economic growth. They are responsible for approximately 2/3 all new private sector jobs. How can current small businesses be provided with critical support?*

### **Preparing and Training Workers**

*How can rural areas create inter-organizational and collaborative worker training networks to provide a skilled workforce?*

### **Expanding Job Opportunities by Boosting Exports**

*President Obama stated on his recent trip to Asia that “Right now, our exports support millions upon millions of well-paying American jobs. Increasing those exports by just a small amount has the potential to create millions more.” How can rural America be involved on expanding exports?*