



### *Our Mission:*

*Rural Partners is a member-driven forum  
that links individuals, businesses, organizations and communities  
with public and private resources  
to maximize the potential of rural Illinois.*

[www.ruralpartners.org](http://www.ruralpartners.org)

## ***SOME 2011 HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS***

### **Rural Partners . . . . .**

#### **Building a Statewide Network**

Rural Partners provides networking opportunities at conferences; posts information to the updated and interactive website; publishes a newsletter, shares success stories, funding opportunities and ideas; and responds to individual initiatives across the state. Rural Partners acts as an intermediary to resolve impediments between communities, not-for-profit corporations, businesses, state and federal agencies, and others helping to resolve impediments to progress.

#### **Sponsors, Plans and Participates in Conferences**

Rural Partners co-sponsors and attracts exhibitors to community and business development, broadband, leadership and other conferences to inform rural leaders, enable them to replicate success, and to find creative approaches to address problems and develop opportunities. Rural Partners was a gold level sponsor of the Economic Development Downstate Summit, which was attended by more than 200 economic developers and legislators. The purpose of the summit was to develop support of favorable legislation for TIF Districts and Enterprise Zones. The annual Rural Economic Development Conference in Peoria is March 7-8, 2012 and the annual Leadership Conference is June 6, 2012.

#### **Provides Funding for the Illinois Rural Life Poll**

The results of the Rural Life Poll, conducted by the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs and partially funded by Rural Partners, has been widely used by community leaders, policy makers, conference planners and others as well as the Rural Partners board.

#### **Publishes a Regular Newsletter**

Rural Partners is recommitted to provide regular newsletters with articles about funding, conferences, success stories and more. Our members and others are encouraged to contribute articles and information which can help promote your company, your community, your cause or your ideas. More than 95% of our members say they read these newsletters.

#### **Keeps You in Touch with State Government Leadership**

As a member of the Governor's Rural Affairs Council and Housing, Child Care, Extension, Transportation and other task forces, Rural Partners is informed of state rural development initiatives and funding opportunities, and steps up to share issues and address problems facing rural communities and businesses.

#### **Updated Rural Partners Website**

Rural Partners updated its website to make it more informative, responsive and interactive to better serve our members and others. Check it out at [www.ruralpartners.org](http://www.ruralpartners.org)

#### **Speaks for and Advocates for Rural Issues**

Rural communities and organizations look to Rural Partners to be their voice. Rural Partners provided that voice at Illinois affordable housing task force meetings; at the Governor's Rural Affairs Council; and through its memberships in the National Partners for Rural America, Association of Counties, Association of Townships, Extension Partners, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and others.

#### **Supported Establishment of an Annual Housing Awards Program**

With others, Rural Partners actively supported the establishment of an annual awards program to recognize and seek duplication of housing initiatives that demonstrated innovation and excellence.

#### **Asks for Feedback from Members**

Rural Partners stays in touch with its members. Rural Partners continually seeks input from its members and others to determine their needs and priorities and what services Rural Partners should offer. Continuing existing services in this time of tight budgets, obtaining broadband service and supporting existing businesses and entrepreneurs are current high priority goals.

#### **Join Rural Partners!**

Your voice can be heard, along with others, through Rural Partners. For more information, go to [www.ruralpartners.org](http://www.ruralpartners.org)