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Rural Youth Summit to Help Revitalize Rural America

Presidential Candidates Invited to Meet with Participants

MINNEAPOLIS — The Rural Youth Summit to be held next month will connect young people from rural communities around the country to exchange ideas on the challenges and opportunities of living in rural areas. The “Rural Youth Summit: Revitalizing Rural America” will be held on October 26-27 in Ames, Iowa. Details can be found at: www.iatp.org.

In every decade from 1950 to 2000, rural communities have lost large numbers of young adults to urban areas. Rural youth face a number of challenges, particularly related to jobs, access to capital, and training and education. In addition, young people in rural areas have expressed that they haven't felt valued as part of the community and lack social opportunities.

“Young people living, working and studying in rural communities have a lot to say about how to address these and other problems,” said Amy Stratton, Rural Communities Organizer at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. “The Summit is designed to give rural youth a forum to put their ideas forward and work together.”

Youth participants, defined as 35 and younger, and rural youth activists of any age are encouraged to submit presentation and workshop proposals for the Summit. University students, beginning farmers, new Americans, technical college students, young professionals, high school students, entrepreneurs, rural youth advocates, and young people who dream of living in rural areas are invited to participate.

Highlights of the Summit include:

- 2008 presidential candidates have been invited to discuss rural youth issues in conjunction with the 2nd National Forum on Agriculture and Rural Life (leagueofruralvoters.org);
- Leadership training and youth round-table discussions;
- Presentations by and for rural youth;
- Opportunities to network with other rural youth.

Planning team members include: Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Gustavus Adolphus College, Sustainable Farming Association of MN, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (MN), Honor the Earth, Northern Great Plains, Renewing the Countryside, League of Rural Voters, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and Iowa State University.

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works globally to promote resilient family farms, healthy communities and ecosystems through research and education, science and technology, and advocacy. <http://www.iatp.org>.