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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **Prairie Rural Action to Hold Meeting in Fargo**

## **Meeting and Movement Aimed at Revitalizing Rural Communities**

Fargo - A new effort to develop strategies and a shared policy agenda to revitalize rural communities will be undertaken at a meeting of Prairie Rural Action at the Fargo Civic Center on November 14 and 15.

The meeting was organized to discuss and develop joint responses to challenges facing rural communities throughout the Upper Midwest and Great Plains. Rural counties account for 49 of the 50 poorest counties in the country and almost 25 percent of farm families live in poverty. At the same time, new economic opportunities are emerging that provide a chance for rural residents to revitalize their communities.

“The time is ripe to tackle national rural policy again by bringing together existing networks and leaders to build a powerful movement,” said Jim Kleinschmit, Director of the Rural Communities Program at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. “There is a lot of energy behind a progressive rural vision. That energy is ready to move from ideas to action.”

Regional organizations and individuals are coming together under the banner of Prairie Rural Action to discuss progressive values, beliefs and principles that are shared among rural communities throughout the Upper Midwest and Great Plains. From Latino and New American communities to Native Americans, from farmers and ranchers to artists and entrepreneurs, the meeting will broaden the dialogue to include the diversity of hopes and concerns of rural residents and communities. The Prairie Rural Action gathering will be an opportunity for participants to share knowledge, ideas, strategies and hope, but will also provide direction and motivation for developing and acting upon a progressive rural vision.

Scheduled speakers include: Jerry Nagel of Northern Great Plains, Shawnthea Monroe-Mueller of First Congregational United Church of Christ, Mark Ritchie of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Eliot Glassheim of the North Dakota Legislature, Chuck Hassebrook of the Center for Rural Affairs, Ali Webb of the Kellogg Foundation, and Dee Davis of the Center for Rural Strategies.

The meeting is being convened by Northern Great Plains, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Center for Rural Affairs, Renewing the Countryside, and the League of Rural Voters.

For more details, go to: [www.prairieruralaction.org](http://www.prairieruralaction.org).

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