



YANCEYVILLE TO CELEBRATE NC STEP KICKOFF

YANCEYVILLE, NC –The word is out and the Town of Yanceyville is proud to have been chosen as one of the selected 20 applicants representing 32 small towns across the state to take part in its three-year N.C. Small Towns Economic Prosperity (NC STEP) demonstration program.

“It is a great honor to be chosen among all the other applicants in the state, I would encourage Businesses, Churches and Community Leaders to get involved.” said Mayor Dan Printz.

Yanceyville will celebrate with a kick-off ceremony on September 9th from 5 pm until 9 pm. The Town will have food, music and will also be sponsoring an **OPEN HOUSE** at the New **YANCEYVILLE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING**.

NC STEP is part of the center’s Small Towns Initiative, which was launched in November 2005 to help revitalize the state’s economically distressed towns of fewer than 10,000 residents.

Rural Center president Billy Ray Hall said that the program will open doors to economic opportunity by allowing small towns to develop and accelerate development projects. “Small towns are the heart and soul of North Carolina, but so many of them today are struggling just to survive in this new economy,” Hall said. “They have tremendous potential, and this demonstration program is going to support their journey toward economic prosperity.”

The following small towns will participate as individual demonstration sites: **Candor**, Montgomery County; **Columbia**, Tyrrell County; **Grifton**, Pitt and Lenoir counties; **Marion**, McDowell County; **Marshall**, Madison County; **Maxton**, Robeson County; **Mount Gilead**, Montgomery County; **Pinetops**, Edgecombe County; **Plymouth**, Washington County; **Robbins**, Moore County; **Scotland Neck**, Halifax County; **Sparta**, Alleghany County; **Swan Quarter**, Hyde County; **Valdese**, Burke County; **Yanceyville**, Caswell County.

The following small towns will participate as part of a cluster of demonstration communities under the direction of a lead organization, county or town:

High Country Small Towns Cluster – Bakersville, Mitchell County; Crossnore, Avery County; West Jefferson/Todd, Ashe County. Lead: Handmade in America.

Western Small Towns Cluster – Bryson City, Swain County; Chimney Rock, Rutherford County; Hayesville, Clay County; Mars Hill, Madison County. Lead: Handmade in America.

Surry County Cluster – Elkin, Dobson and Pilot Mountain in Surry County. Lead: Surry County Economic Development Partnership.

Bladen County Cluster – Bladenboro, Clarkton, Elizabethtown and White Lake in Bladen County. Lead: Bladen’s Bloomin’ Inc.

East Columbus County Cluster – Bolton, Columbus County; East Arcadia, Bladen County; Sandyfield, Columbus County. Lead: Town of Bolton.

Each demonstration site will receive \$20,000 in planning funds to develop its initiatives and will be eligible to receive up to \$200,000 in grants to implement local projects.

In addition, the towns will receive training and coaching assistance and will have opportunities for global networking during the program’s three-year plan of work. As they develop and initiate their projects, demonstration sites will have the benefit of one-on-one assistance from community development specialists and will receive valuable information and training through workshops ranging from Brownfield development and historic preservation to financial and infrastructure issues.

About the Small Towns Initiative

The \$10.5 million Small Towns Initiative is a broad-based effort to bring greater prosperity and a better quality of life to North Carolina towns of fewer than 10,000 residents. The initiative targets resources to those towns experiencing economic hardship. Its strategies range from improving the capacity of local communities to plan and implement initiatives to stimulating job-creating investments and developing public policy recommendations. North Carolina has 478 towns of fewer than 10,000 residents, a total of some 920,000 people. The Rural Center built its Small Towns Initiative on the knowledge that many small towns are struggling with business closings and layoffs, natural disasters and persistent poverty.

The N.C. Rural Economic Development Center is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop sound economic strategies that improve the quality of life in rural North Carolina, with a special focus on individuals with low to moderate incomes and communities with limited resources. The center operates a multifaceted program that includes conducting research into rural issues; testing promising rural development strategies; advocating for policy and program innovations; and building the productive capacity of rural leaders, entrepreneurs and community organizations.