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Reconnecting America Team Selected to Help Build Capacity of Sustainable Communities Grantees

(August 17, 2011) A team led by Reconnecting America has won a competitive grant to assist communities that have received Sustainable Communities Grants. The Reconnecting America team was one of eight chosen by the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help existing federal grantees work together to solve common problems.

“These organizations will form capacity-building networks among the grantees to exchange ideas on successful strategies, lessons learned, emerging tools, and public engagement plans,” the notice from HUD explained. “This work will strengthen the capacity grantee communities to create more housing choices, make transportation more efficient and reliable, make more efficient investments in water and wastewater infrastructure, and build vibrant, healthy and economically prosperous neighborhoods for American families.”

Reconnecting America’s team will develop effective implementation strategies for economic development and local and regional plans.

“All of the team members look forward to working with HUD, EPA and communities around the country in laying the foundation for a 21st century economy and helping to create more financially, environmentally, and socially sustainable communities,” said Reconnecting America President and CEO John Robert Smith.

Catherine Cox Blair, Program Director for Reconnecting America’s Leadership, Innovation, Networks, and Knowledge (LINK) program, will be project lead for the team.

“Team members each have direct experience in building capacity through provision of national resources, best practices and education programs, as well as direct, hand on technical assistance in regions across the country,” said Cox Blair.

In addition to Reconnecting America, the team includes:

- Strategic Economics, a consulting and research firm specializing in urban and regional economics and planning, with offices in Berkeley, CA and Seattle, WA.
- Center for Neighborhood Technology, a “think-and-do” tank that researches, promotes, and implements innovative and equitable solutions to strengthen economies and benefit the environment with offices in Chicago, IL, San Francisco, CA, and Washington, DC;
- Enterprise Community Partners, a national nonprofit organization providing financing and solutions for housing and communities based in Columbia, MD and with offices across the country.
- National Charrette Institute, a national nonprofit research and education organization located in Portland, Oregon with faculty on the East and West coasts.
- Center for Creative Land Recycling, a San Francisco-based nonprofit that provides program and project level technical assistance and training for sustainable infill and brownfields redevelopment.
- Kim Burnett Consulting, a consulting firm specializing in the revitalization of older industrial regions and integrating strategies to promote economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and equitable outcomes for communities.

Reconnecting America, Strategic Economics and the Center for Neighborhood Technology are also partners in the Center for Transit-Oriented Development (CTOD). Reconnecting America has worked with the other team members in various capacities in the past.

About Reconnecting America

Reconnecting America is a national nonprofit that is helping to transform promising ideas into thriving communities - where transportation choices make it easy to get from place to place, where businesses flourish, and where people from all walks of life can afford to live, work and visit. Reconnecting America is the managing partner of the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, the only national nonprofit effort funded by Congress to promote best practices in transit-oriented development. Reconnecting America is also a founding partner of Transportation for America, a broad coalition of housing, environmental, equal opportunity, public health, urban planning, transportation and other organizations focused on creating a 21st century national transportation program. For more information visit our website, www.reconnectingamerica.org.