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**SRDI Provides Federal Funds Training in South Carolina**

Raleigh, NC- The Southern Rural Development Initiative (SRDI) conducted training for local leaders in Allendale, Barnwell and Bamberg Counties in South Carolina on analyzing their federal funding by category and alignment with local priorities. Additionally, training linking federal funds to Earned Income Tax Credits was conducted for neighboring Marlboro, Chesterfield, and Dillon counties of SC on the following day.

SRDI conducted trainings with diverse rural leaders – experts in education, economic development, and local government -- to understand the local federal funding patterns, the implications of those patterns on local communities, and strategies to better align their funding to local priorities. SRDI staffers Omisade Burney-Scott and Jason Gray conducted both sessions.

During these training sessions local leaders were able to gauge the difference between their current flow of funds and the articulated needs of their communities; they were able to understand the similarity of their conditions to other areas that share similar funding flows; and they formed coalitions and bonding relationships with people from other counties that share interests. They were able to understand conceptually that enduring policy change happens when broad constituencies are built.

This emerging multi-county partnership with SRDI is an effort to craft a 2008 work plan based on a shared sense of opportunities and challenges. This work plan includes elements of policy, community-based philanthropy, and grassroots support efforts.

Participant evaluations reported high satisfaction with the sessions and a desire to continue work with SRDI and the local partners.

The Southern Rural Development Initiative, started in 1992, supports rural leaders through four strategies to build local assets: community-based philanthropy, grassroots support organizing, asset-based economic development, and rural policy. Over the past year, the agency implemented policy initiatives in two communities in South Carolina and one in Louisiana; implemented the philanthropy training in twelve communities, and built grassroots networks in three regions of the South. The agency works across the twelve states of the rural South.

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*Increasing income, assets, and racial equity across the rural South*