

FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE
October 30, 2007

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REGIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
HIRES DIRECTOR OF CONSTITUENT RELATIONS

Raleigh, NC - The Southern Rural Development Initiative (SRDI) announced its hire today of Omisade Burney-Scott as its first Director of Constituent Relations.

The position was created to (1) manage the agency's support of its rural partners; (2) direct regional and national resources to communities to sustain economic success; and (3) build a "Rural Innovation Network" consisting of in-person training and convening along with a web-based portal for interactive peer dialogue to bridge the isolation of rural areas.

"Rural communities are rich with a genuineness of self that is often not acknowledged, understood, or respected by those outside of that community," said Burney-Scott. "It is important that the narrative born out of rural communities be grounded in the authentic and unique complexities of each community. My work through SRDI will help to strengthen their ability to influence and direct a collective vision for a more viable and healthy economy across the rural South".

A native of New Bern, NC, Burney-Scott's career spans higher education, non-profit leadership, philanthropy and organizational coaching. She comes to SRDI after serving as a project officer with Active Living by Design, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Prior leadership includes program direction at the Warner Foundation and Public Allies North Carolina. She is a founding member of a giving circle -- NGAAP, Next Generation of African American Philanthropists -- and serves on the boards of "stone circles" and the Fund for Southern Communities. She is a 1999-2001 William C. Friday Fellow for Human Relations.

"Omisade's experience and skills cover almost all the critical areas of SRDI's work and she is an extraordinary connector of people. Her contribution to SRDI is already being strongly felt," said Executive Director Alan McGregor.

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; facilitated a community process to convert a youth prison into a community learning center in Tallulah, LA; implemented 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 with offices in Raleigh and Asheville, NC.

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