

# Task Force Gives Rural Development Proposals

The report of the President's Task Force on Rural Development, presented recently to the Rural Affairs Council, contains some 78 recommendations, ranging from the creation of a rural development credit bank to a study of the rate structure of public carriers with rural growth in mind.

Prominent among specific recommendations are these proposals:

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investment tax credits for attracting industry to non-metropolitan growth areas.

The creation of a rural development credit bank.

The recommendation that the Nation's industries should launch a campaign to establish jobs and plant locations in countryside America.

Greater use of funds for comprehensive planning under Section 701 of the Housing Act.

A long term program of forest resource management of private non-industry land, including reforestation of economically marginal crop land.

The report further recommends that the Interstate Commerce Commission make an analysis of the development implications of the rate structure of public carriers as these relate to the rural part of the country as compared with the cities, and among rural areas.

At this stage, the Rural Affairs Council has heard the report and at forthcoming meetings will be considering the specific recommendations made.

Other recommendations of the report included:

"The first function of the Council for Rural Affairs should be to establish appropriate goals, policies and priorities for the economic and social development of rural countryside America," the report said.

"The Task Force recommends that new and revised programs should be designed to preserve and strengthen our decentralized

system of government; make maximum use of private enterprise, and aim to solve problems rather than perpetually treat the symptoms.

"We recommend that Rural Development efforts be organized around present or potential 'growth centers' and that Rural Development committees be organized on county, multi-county and regional bases.

"We urge that communities which are too small to manage a worthwhile Rural Development program themselves, unite with other communities, towns and counties to pool their strengths into viable economic growth centers.

"We urge the housing industry to develop special programs to provide better adapted, more economical housing for rural areas.

"Educational programs should be developed to assure people living in the small cities, towns and on the farms of Rural America of educational opportunities that are comparable in quality and quantity to those provided others in our society, including pre-school, general education and vocational and occupational education."

The Task Force, a blue-ribbon committee of concerned private citizens appointed by the President September 29, 1969, was headed by Mrs. Haven Smith of Chappell, Nebraska, national chairman of the American Farm Bureau Women.

Other members included Dr. Joseph Ackerman, managing director of the Farm Foundation, Dr. C. E. Bishop of the University of North Carolina, William Erwin, a farm manager from Etta Green, Indiana, Claude W. Gilford, of Farm Journal, Dr. Roy M. Kottman, of Ohio State University, Clifford G. McIntire, former Member of Congress, True D. Morse, former Under Secretary of Agriculture, Dr. Emiel W. Owens, of Prairie View A&M College, Al A. Schock, president of Nordica Food Company, Incorporated, P. Kenneth Shoemaker, vice president for governmental relations of Heinz Company, and Dr. Henry A.

Wadsworth, Jr. of Purdue University.

Its charge from the President was to recommend "what might be done in the private and public sectors to stimulate rural development."

Rural development is, however many things:

Rural development is aimed at those with low incomes and the underemployed, but it is not just a poverty program — however, dealing with poverty is a No. 1 challenge.

Rural development is a 'people' program to lift up those in greatest need, whether disadvantaged for economic or social reasons — but it is not a civil rights program or a rural slum program. However, by creating greater opportunity for all, those who will be helped the most are those who have been the most disadvantaged.

Rural development is aimed at job creation, but it is not just an industrialization program — although jobs through private enterprise is the key to long-lasting economic opportunity.

It is aimed at improving Rural America, but it is not just a farm or rural program that benefits only those in the rural countryside — although this is where the work will be done.

Rural development is built on local initiative, but it does not depend solely on local resources and local leadership, nevertheless, local initiative is the key to the success of rural development.

Rural development is aimed at a better quality of life, but rural development is not just a social program — even though quality of life and a better society is the end product of rural development.

Rural development is aimed at population and industrial dispersion, but it is not just a land policy or settlement program — however, physical surroundings and environmental development are vital for clean air, clear water, open space, scenic beauty, recreation and room to live.

"Rural development, then, is a combination of specific programs directed toward a broad horizon — all intended to help create a

nation of greater beauty, deeper satisfactions and expanded opportunities for all Americans, now and in the future, both in urban and rural areas.

"Rural development will build a new rural countryside America, and by building a new and better Rural America we will build better cities and a better America — a new life for the country.

Additional recommendations by the President's task force.

"We recommend a national campaign to involve people in their local government.

"The Task Force recommends the simplification and streamlining of procedures for applying for Rural Development Assistance.

"We recommend that local communities develop zoning guidelines for future growth and development, including plans for adequate open space and recreation.

"We recommend that communities inventory the capabilities of local people and local resources, study what is happening in their areas, and lay out a program to stimulate local production and development.

"We urge private enterprise groups to organize management assistance for small business enterprises in countryside Rural America.

"We recommend a special effort by banks, financial institutions and the Small Business Administration to lend money and provide management aids for small businesses in countryside America.

"The Task Force recommends that Land-Grant colleges and universities step up their commitment to direct more of their efforts toward the needs of countryside communities and rural people with special emphasis on meeting the informational and educational needs of low-income groups.

"The Task Force recommends that the Federal Highway Act be amended to provide for a classification in the Federal-state highway system to be designated 'Rural Development Highways.' These new short-mileage highways should lead to existing highways thereby serving local areas that have a high development potential."

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