

# National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board

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May 22, 2008

The Honorable Edward Schafer  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Jamie L. Whitten Building, Room 200-A  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Schafer,

At the October, 2007 general meeting of The National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (the Board), a focus session was held on the subject of "Rural Economic and Community Development: Opportunities for USDA and Cooperative Extension". During this session REE Mission Area staff as well as Land Grant University and Stakeholder experts updated the Board with respect to rural development and its long-term sustainability, research and extension programming in entrepreneurship, and interactions among the agencies to support rural economic development, especially in minority communities.

From these presentations and the discussions that followed this focus session, the Board has developed a list of eight recommendations for the USDA to consider. Our Board believes these recommendations, if implemented, will enhance the current initiatives of the REE Mission Area and ensure that the "Rural Economic Renaissance", which we are presently enjoying, is maintained for years to come.

It is with pleasure that I provide you the Board's summary report and recommendations from this focus session. As always, I remain available to discuss our findings with you at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. A. Massengale". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "M".

Martin A. Massengale  
Chair

Enclosures

cc: Deputy Secretary Conner  
Under Secretary for REE Buchanan  
U.S. House and Senate Agriculture and Appropriations committees/subcommittees