

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Statewide Rural Development Conference to Focus on Strengthening Communities

(LINCOLN, NEB.) Identifying and maximizing leadership, community and economic strengths to help rural communities throughout the state pursue and develop partnerships will be the focus of the 2012 Governor's Conference on Rural Development. The theme for the all-day event is "Partnering for Progress." This year's conference theme unites the Nebraska Rural Development Commission, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and ServeNebraska, the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission.

The conference will be held Wednesday, April 18, at Holiday Inn Express in North Platte. The event will feature a full day of workshops on a range of topics that are included in the Conference's three tracks – Strengthening Communities, Volunteerism & Community Engagement and Youth Entrepreneurship. The morning will begin with a welcome from Governor Dave Heineman and Mayor Marc Kaschke, North Platte.

The conference is open to anyone. Registration is \$50 per person through March 31, and \$75 beginning April 1. The registration fee includes refreshments and the First Lady's Community Service and Connecting Nebraska Awards luncheon. More information including the full agenda and online registration is available at: www.serve.nebraska.gov.

The keynote speaker will be April Kelly, a multi-dimensional connector and communicator, with a passion for developing team vision and culture. Kelly is a networking expert and will share time-tested advice and practical tools that will help businesses and individuals build a strong brand and real networking connections that deliver results. She is the author of "Gratitude at Work", a Best Books Award finalist in the Business Management and Leadership category. Her latest book, "Spaghetti on the Wall, Branding and Networking Methods that Stick" will be available for purchase at the conference.

The day-long youth track will focus on entrepreneurial development and is targeted to students in the 6th, 7th and 8th grades. Youth registration is \$25 with limited scholarships available. Youth interested in applying for participation need to email a letter of application to, Diane Vigna, PhD, at dvigna@unlnotes.unl.edu, 402-472-6318. Applications must be received by 5pm on March 23.

"In addition to the great economic development and community engagement information being presented, this conference is a great opportunity for people to learn firsthand how to increase capacity in rural Nebraska, in order to create a more sustainable state," said Linda Fetting, Rural Development Commission Executive Director.

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