



Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative
Growing Rural Iowa Task Force Meeting Agenda
Greenfield, IA
Monday, September 15
10 – 11 AM

1. Roll Call & Introductions

Lt. Governor Gregg	Sandy Ehrig	Jenae Jenison
James Hoelscher	Linc Kroger	Senator Sweeney
Stephanie Fromm	Travis Tolliver	Ashley Moyer
Emily Schmitt	Jason Neises	Sharon Stroh
Rob Denson	Stacy Besch	Jenna Ramsey
Ron Reischl	Whitney Baethke	Shannon Landauer

Guests:

Peter Johnson – Midwest Partnership

Karen Varley – Midwest Partnership

Staci Hupp Ballard – Iowa Economic Development Authority

2. Approval of Minutes – July 28, 2021

Passed unanimously.

3. Welcoming Remarks from Lt .Gov. Gregg

Lt. Governor Gregg welcomed members and thanked them for attending in person and virtually. Recap on all of the fantastic things happening in the state recently: Field of Dreams game, Iowa State Fair, Farm Progress Show (took place in Illinois but really showcases the great things happening in Iowa), and College Game Day. Highlighted the recent announcement from the Governor on the \$100 million to support housing initiatives. Seeing success from our grant dollars.

4. Remarks by Co-Chair Sandy Ehrig

Sandy welcomed members. April 12-13 will be the next Rural Summit in Ames. Highlighted the success of the Rural Summit in August. Rural Development Council meeting is later this afternoon in West Des Moines.

5. Leadership Exchange & Bootcamp

James Hoelscher and Stacy Besch outlined the upcoming Leadership Exchange & Bootcamp event happening in October. Discussion on the agenda, keynotes, and roundtable discussions.

6. Rural Return Grant Program

Jason Neises provided an overview on the creation of the Rural Return Grant program. Aimed at kickstarting innovation on providing an incentive for communities to attract new residents, workers, and leaders.

7. Grant Updates

Liesl Seabert provided an overview on the other grants launching by October 1, with a December 1 deadline, including the Rural Child Care Market Study Grant, Rural Innovation Grant, and Rural Housing Assessment Grant.

8. This is Iowa Campaign

Staci Hupp Ballard presented on the research behind This is Iowa and the marketing strategy moving forward. Questions about how communities were selected to be included on the website and discussion on how Empower Rural Iowa can be involved in the future to ensure rural Iowa is also showcased.

9. Public Comment: None

10. Wrap-up & Next Steps:

The Lt. Governor asked members to please help spread the word on the grant programs and the upcoming Leadership Exchange and encouraged member to attend the Exchange as able.

11. Adjourn: Those in Greenfield attended a walking tour of Main Street