

**MINUTES OF THE  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT LEGISLATIVE LIAISON COMMITTEE**  
Thursday, September 21, 2006 – 10:30 a.m. – Room W110 House Building

**Members Present:**

Rep. DeMar 'Bud' Bowman, House Chair  
Sen. Thomas Hatch, Senate Chair  
Sen. Mike Dmitrich  
Sen. Scott K. Jenkins  
Rep. Patrick L. Painter  
Rep. Mark A. Wheatley

Rep. James R. Gowans  
Rep. Eric K. Hutchings  
Rep. Brad King

**Members Absent:**

Sen. Ed P. Mayne  
Rep. Douglas C. Aagard

**Staff Present:**

Mr. Stewart E. Smith, Policy Analyst  
Ms. Susan Creager Allred, Associate General Counsel  
Ms. Wendy Bangerter, Legislative Secretary

**Note:** A list of others present, copy of related materials, and audio recording of the meeting can be found at [www.le.utah.gov](http://www.le.utah.gov).

**1. Committee Business**

Senator Thomas V. Hatch called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m.

Due to the lack of a quorum, the minutes of the November 8, 2005 meeting were not approved.

**2. Governor's Rural Partnership Board Report (GRPB)**

Lieutenant Governor Gary R. Herbert described the role of the GRPB (Governor's Rural Partnership Board) as outlined in S.B. 50 (2004 General Session) as the liaison between the rural communities and the Legislature. He commented on the economic growth that has been realized by many of the rural counties. He emphasized the importance of local governments making their own decisions for their opportunities and growth.

Mr. Jeff Packer, Cochair, GRPB, explained the USTAR (Utah Science Technology and Research) Initiative and the \$4 million that was appropriated to benefit rural Utah. He expressed concern that appropriations might not be distributed properly to benefit rural Utah, but may be allocated for use on other projects. He encouraged the Legislature to assist the GRPB in helping USTAR to direct and shape its vision. Mr. Packer stated the GRPB will continue to encourage micro-lending practices, but indicated the program may need state appropriations to expand the system further into rural Utah.

Mr. Gayle McKeachnie, Director, Rural Affairs, Office of the Lieutenant Governor, explained that the USTAR Initiative members have met and opened communication with the GRPB. He discussed the outreach program and indicated it is USTAR's vision to place the program in five institutions of higher education throughout the state. Mr. McKeachnie recommended that a member of the GRPB be placed on the USTAR advisory board.

Ms. Noelle Crockett, Vice President of USU (Utah State University) Extension, reported on entrepreneurial outreach and educational opportunities in rural Utah. She explained the pilot program to provide training and information for county agents in rural Utah, particularly to Kane, Garfield, Emery, and Sanpete Counties because they currently have county economic

development agents. In addition to the USTAR outreach program, USU has programs to extend education opportunities to rural Utah.

Chair Hatch expressed the need for better accountability so that appropriations to the universities are not diverted from the projects for which they were intended.

Mr. McKeachnie distributed a report given by Mr. Packer at a meeting on August 11, 2006. He also distributed charts indicating how successful each county in the state is in educating its population. He reported that the focus of the August 11 meeting was the labor force of the state. One study indicated a deficiency in the work force for new management and financial skills. Utah is recruiting from outside the state to fill those kinds of jobs. He stated that the most accurate predictor of economic prosperity is the percentage of people with advanced education skills and that the economic success of rural Utah can be changed by increasing education in those areas. He described how the Uintah Basin partnered with USU to educate people locally so they have the opportunity to remain in that rural area. Mr. McKeachnie proposed an education initiative for rural Utah to bring rural citizens on par with the rest of the state in the number of bachelor degrees earned and held. He said this can be accomplished with the basic infrastructure by focusing on those skills that are most in demand. He encouraged the current Legislature to be protectors of rural education, which results in leadership and rural community development.

Mr. DeLynn Fielding, Carbon County Economic Development, addressed utilities and the cost of bringing them to rural Utah. He said it is important and beneficial for the state to have flexible, timely, and affordable utilities in rural Utah. He said that the state can help by making up the cost difference that distance and implementing the infrastructure creates.

Mr. Rob Adams, Beaver County Economic Development, addressed the lack of utility infrastructure in rural areas and how this impacts the cost and accessibility of utilities. He stated that the Legislature can help by bringing this public policy question to the legislative body for discussion.

Ms. Nan Anderson, Utah Tourism Industry Coalition, addressed the availability of health care insurance for small rural businesses. She stated she is participating in a task force led by Governor Huntsman, which includes small business owners, that will address the issue.

### **3. Other Items / Adjourn**

**MOTION:** Sen. Jenkins moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Dmitrich absent for the vote.

Chair Hatch adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.