



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Deputy Secretary Censky to keynote infrastructure workshop

OAK BROOK, IL March 27, 2018: The April 10-11 workshop, *Economic Returns to Rural Infrastructure Investments*, will feature a keynote address by USDA Deputy Secretary Steve Censky, as well as presentations by economists and industry leaders.

A collaboration of Farm Foundation and USDA's Economic Research Service, the workshop will examine current research on the impact of rural infrastructure investments on economic activity.

"To move ahead with rural infrastructure improvements we need the best economic tools available to assess long-term benefits," explains Farm Foundation President Constance Cullman. "This workshop is a vital step in sharpening those tools."



The workshop will be at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., with sessions planned 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, April 10, and 8:30 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, April 11. Workshop participants will include university researchers, government agency representatives, private consultants, community leaders, and experts in the economic assessment process used by international development organizations for project funding.

A preliminary agenda is available. There is no fee to attend but registration is requested and can be [completed here](#). There is no fee to attend the workshop but registration is requested and can be [completed here](#).

The workshop will help researchers and stakeholders identify practical research that exists or is needed on the economic returns of investments in rural infrastructure, including highways, bridges, railways, broadband, electrical systems, and water and sewer systems.

"A current approach to rank and select rural infrastructure projects is evaluating expected returns on investment (ROI). But today, relatively little is known about the economic or social returns on rural infrastructure investments," says Cullman. "Some studies have looked at infrastructure relative to productivity or GDP, but very few have assessed ROI or looked

specifically at rural infrastructure investments. This type of information is needed to help public and private leaders make decisions about infrastructure investments."

Through a series of seven commissioned papers, workshop participants will examine what is known about ROI on infrastructure improvements, identify gaps in the knowledge base, and assess how this information can be used in future investment decisions by public- and private-sector leaders. Topics for the papers include the role of government and private investments and partnerships, evaluating issues for federal and state governments, the ROI on rural broadband investments, and benefit-cost analysis.

For more information contact:

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USDA Economic Research Service: *USDA's Economic Research Service's (ERS) mission is to anticipate trends and emerging issues in agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America, and to conduct high-quality, objective economic research to inform and enhance public and private decision making. ERS shapes its research program and products to serve those who routinely make or influence public policy and program decisions. Key clientele include White House and USDA policy officials; the U.S. Congress; program administrators/managers; other Federal agencies; State and local government officials; and organizations, including farm and industry groups interested in public policy issues.*

Farm Foundation *is an agricultural policy institute cultivating dynamic non-partisan collaboration to meet society's needs for food, fiber, feed and energy. Since 1933, the Farm Foundation has connected leaders in farming, business, academia, organizations and government through proactive, rigorous debate and objective issue analysis.*

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