



NEWS RELEASE

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Tourism Revenue Opportunities for Rural Residents Provided by USDA Grant

Utah is one of two states that will soon benefit from an USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) received by KAAPA Country-Adventures. Country-Adventures, an ecommerce marketplace for rural tourism, was awarded \$72,318 to develop and expand the Rural Resource Marketing Assistance (RRMA) program, a service program of Country-Adventures. The RRMA program includes training qualified individuals to assist rural residents to identify, develop and market the enjoyment and experience of their existing resources to the general public. Such resources can include hunting, fishing, stargazing, snowmobiling, kite flying, farm tours, heritage or cultural tours, and a great deal more.

KAAPA created www.country-adventures.com to allow farmers a way to affordably and easily make ancillary income with resources they already own; and at the same time connect the public to the opportunity to experience the enjoyment of the country and outdoor adventures.

“Today’s tourists want an ‘experience’ versus just an impression, and they want that experience to be authentic,” said Marge Lauer Project Director and CEO for Country-Adventures. “Just stating that makes it obvious that we need to connect the consumer to the country, and that’s what our website does by allowing people to buy and sell all things rural, unique and real. Yet, the first step is to assist the rural resource owners in identifying their marketable resources to they can generate net revenue from their efforts, and assisting them with finding adequate liability insurance coverage. That is the RRMA program.”

The company’s website went live in late 2006 and has grown to offer over 200 rural tourism experiences. “This program is on its way to emerging as the national on-line mall for rural tourism,” said Lauer Project Director. “Receiving this grant will allow us to concentrate and target specific states for even greater expansion, benefiting even more rural residents and the national agricultural and tourism industries as a whole.”

Lauer also states that while the initial mission behind the creation of Country-Adventures was for the farmer/rancher/rural resident to enter into the rural tourism industry; existing rural tourism providers are also listing on the web site. As an “online mall,” the more options and opportunities made available to the consumer, the better. Plus, finding several attractions in one area encourages more visitors.

“This project will help to assist agritourism businesses in rural Utah, and is a good example of how USDA-Rural Development can help fund rural projects that support a diversified rural economy, assist rural businesses, and help create and save rural jobs,” said Richard Carrig, Business and Cooperatives Program Director. For more information on a USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG), contact your nearest USDA Rural Development office.

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