



FoodHub in the News

Gardennews.biz

July 11, 2011

Oregonian Participates in White House Rural Champions of Change Meeting with President Obama

PORTLAND, Ore. – Early this week, Deborah Kane, Vice President for Food & Farms at Ecotrust, was at the White House for a meeting she was asked to participate in with President Obama, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, the President's Domestic Policy Adviser Melody Barnes, and leaders from rural communities across the country for the White House Rural Champions of Change event.

“Meeting the President was thrilling, but equally thrilling is that this Administration has clearly prioritized ensuring reliable prosperity in rural America,” said Kane. “At the roundtable discussion, I shared feedback from farmers and agricultural producers throughout the Northwest related to the need for infrastructure, better access to credit, and support for ecosystem service markets. I also discussed recent research that shows a small investment in school food can have tremendous economic impact in agricultural communities.”

Kane is one of 17 people from across the country who were invited to share their ideas directly with the Obama Administration about how to strengthen rural communities and promote economic growth. “The President talked a lot about innovation; I was honored to share that innovation is certainly alive and well in the Northwest,” she said.

Kane was selected because of her leadership and success with innovative projects that support Oregon agriculture while bringing healthy, local food to school cafeterias throughout the state. In 2003 Deborah was named one of "50 Great Leaders for Oregon" by Oregon Business Magazine and appointed by Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski to the Oregon Sustainability Board, where she served one term. Deborah has also served as a WK Kellogg Foundation national Food & Society Policy Fellow and, among other achievements, in 2010 she was named one of the “10 Most Inspiring People in Sustainable Food” by Fast Company Magazine for her innovative work with FoodHub, a dynamic online marketplace that connects regional food buyers and sellers.

FoodHub is developing regional food systems and opening doors for rural farmers and ranchers to connect with metro-area restaurants and other wholesale food buyers. In support of the project’s aim to improve markets for regional food producers and businesses, USDA Rural Development contributed grant funding during the initial planning phase of the project. After the FoodHub project demonstrated success, USDA Rural Development

provided additional grant funding in 2010 to assist in its expansion throughout Oregon, Washington and bordering communities.

The FoodHub project demonstrates how technology can be leveraged to expand agricultural markets close to home, and also exemplifies the type of innovation the Administration is working to foster by engaging rural leaders and innovators through the White House Champions of Change effort.

White House Champions of Change

This week, the White House Champions of Change focused specifically on farmers, ranchers and rural stakeholders who are making a positive impact. Champions of Change is a White House initiative that recognizes ordinary Americans who are accomplishing extraordinary things in their communities to out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the rest of the world. The administration acknowledges that the best ideas come directly from the American people, and on a weekly basis a Champions of Change roundtable is held to spotlight some of the top ideas that are making change a reality across the country.

Wednesday's event was part of a series of meetings that are being held across the country this summer as part of the White House Rural Council (WHRC) and the White House Business Council to coordinate programs across government and encourage public-private partnerships to improve economic conditions, quality of life and create jobs in rural communities.

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