

On Thursday, July 17, 2014, RDI Executive Director Craig Smith joined a small group of rural economic development practitioners in Salem to meet with the Secretary of Agriculture, Thomas J. Vilsack. This Rural Opportunities Investment Round Table was organized as a preview of the upcoming Rural Opportunities Investment Conference scheduled for July 23-24, in Washington, DC. The purpose of the round table discussion and the conference is to attract additional investments to rural America by connecting major investors with rural business leaders, government officials, economic development experts and other partners. This effort will promote opportunities to invest in rural America by highlighting successful projects in energy, biofuels and bioproducts, infrastructure, local and regional food systems, transportation, water systems, telecommunications, health care, and manufacturing.

Craig spoke with Secretary Vilsack about the importance of continuing to provide capacity building funds like the Rural Community Development Initiative grant program to help rural communities connect their local businesses to resources that will help them grow, create wealth and make the regional economies stronger and more resilient. RDI's WealthWorks Northwest Initiative is a good example of what the Secretary is promoting; connecting private, public and nonprofit resources to invest in our rural businesses and communities.

