

LOCAL AGRICULTURE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT “Chicago Listening Session”

Hosted by the Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council
and DePaul University

Tuesday, May 20, 3:00pm-5:00pm
DePaul Center
1 East Jackson Blvd. , Room 8005
RSVP to dlhillman@sbcglobal.net

We are requesting your help in shaping the future of an **Illinois-based farmer to consumer agricultural system**. In 2007, the Illinois General Assembly enacted The Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Act. This Bill authorized Governor Blagojevich to appoint a 32-member Task Force, charged with assembling recommendations that would enhance an efficient and fully functioning Illinois food and farm system. Task Force recommendations will be considered by the Illinois General Assembly in 2009.

Listening sessions are being held at various locations statewide to gather recommendations on production, infrastructure, public access, public education, and economic benefits that can be derived from Illinois farmers directly serving the needs of their neighbors. If you have interest in building any part of a farm-to-neighbor agricultural system, your expertise is needed now. Please join us for the Chicago listening session on May 20.

We invite you to become a part of this exciting opportunity by meeting with Task Force members and sharing your experiences, information, and opinions about participating in (or desiring to participate in) an Illinois food and farm product network.

Some key questions for consideration are:

1. What opportunities in local food, fiber, and other farm products do you envision can be derived from Illinois' rich agricultural soils?
2. What obstacles do you see for your farm or business that hinder the development or expansion of farmer to consumer networks?
3. What do you as a consumer of Illinois agricultural products envision or want to see changed?
4. What policy changes as a farmer, businessperson, or consumer would you like made at the state level to help you begin, increase the efficiency of, or complete your endeavor?

5. Are there legal impediments that now hinder you?

6. What else must be done to help you reach your goal of providing, distributing, or purchasing Illinois farm products?

If you want to participate in creating 21st Century farmer to consumer networks in Illinois that will satisfy consumer demand, create jobs, provide economic opportunity, and revitalize Illinois' rural communities, please join us at this listening session. Those who cannot attend in person can submit written comments at any time prior to July 15, 2008 (for electronic submission, send to Debbie Hillman below; for regular mail option, send to 1118 Sherman, Evanston, IL 60202).

For more information, contact Task Force Coordinators:

Jim Braun (Springfield) 515/229-2679 JBraun2525@yahoo.com

Debbie Hillman (Evanston) 847/328-7175 DLHillman@sbcglobal.net