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LETCHWORTH GATEWAY VILLAGES SELECTED FOR NATIONAL USDA RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INNOVATION INITIATIVE

PERRY, NY— June 7, 2019—Letchworth Gateway Villages (LGV) Initiative Director Nicole Manapol today announced that its application to the USDA Rural Economic Development Innovation (REDI) initiative is one of [just 47 nationwide](#) selected to benefit from the program’s technical assistance resources to help build long-term economic growth.

Almost 40 co-applicants from five different counties participated in the application which is aimed at revitalizing the Genesee Valley’s rural economy through sustainable tourism and outdoor recreation.

“This is an incredible opportunity,” said Nicole Manapol, Director of the Letchworth Gateway Villages initiative. “It is a testament to the work of the diverse groups who came together to develop our application that it was selected and viewed as a top proposal. Having access to high quality technical assistance and an intentional and coordinated planning process will help connect these various efforts and sharpen the focus of our collective resources on catalyzing targeted growth in our rural economy.”

The [USDA’s Innovation Center](#) launched the [Rural Economic Development Innovation \(REDI\)](#) initiative specifically to promote collaboration to overcome multi-jurisdictional challenges in rural areas as well as to support regionalized planning to better leverage, federal, state, local and/or private funding.

Through cooperative agreements with leading rural development consulting firms the USDA will provide selected applicants 12-18 months of technical assistance to develop an economic development plan in an area of targeted strength. This technical assistance will result in a strong regional economic development plan that identifies projects that may be eligible for other Rural Development programs and provides a blueprint for leveraging other federal, state, local, or private sector resources.

The USDA awarded \$1.2 million in cooperative agreements to these partners in September 2018. The agreements will help the partners finance the free technical assistance. The partners are the National Association of Counties Research Foundation, the Rural Community Assistance Partnership, McClure Engineering Company, and Purdue University Extension/Community & Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky.

LGV will be working with the [Rural Community Assistance Partnership](#) through their [WealthWorks model](#). Areas selected to participate in this planning initiative with LGV include - Allegany, Livingston and Wyoming Counties, plus rural areas within Monroe County (Scottsville / Town of Wheatland) and Genesee County (Pavilion and Leroy). Key contributors and participants in this effort include but are not limited to: the Genesee River Wilds, Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway, Friends of Letchworth State Park, SUNY Geneseo, The Genesee Valley Health Partnership, the Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, Workforce Development, Education, Planning and Economic Development organizations in Allegany, Wyoming and Livingston Counties as well as multiple private sector businesses.

About the USDA

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov.

About Rural Community Assistance Partnership

The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (www.rcap.org) will deliver technical assistance utilizing the WealthWorks model (www.wealthworks.org) focused on helping rural regions and communities identify existing wealth or assets to build upon, recognize market opportunities and connect local assets to real market demand. WealthWorks allows local leaders to focus on what they have—instead of what they lack—to generate multiple forms of wealth that benefit residents today and for generations to come while rooting value in local people, places, and businesses. WealthWorks offers a systematic approach that engages a wide range of community partners in turning enterprising opportunities into results. This model can complement or incorporate traditional economic development methods, but intentionally focuses on creating more value that becomes rooted locally. WealthWorks' value chain approach is a self-sustaining, distinctive economic development model. Value chains develop from local assets, holistically building relationships and filling gaps to link local small businesses and entrepreneurs with identified market demand.

About Letchworth Gateway Villages

Letchworth Gateway Villages (LGV), is a municipal collaboration aimed at catalyzing economic growth and new tourism-related market opportunities for the communities serving as gateways to Letchworth State Park and the broader Genesee Valley Region. Through network-building, technical assistance, and research, LGV serves as a vehicle to build the regional cooperation critical for realizing our communities' long-term economic potential. For more information, visit: www.letchworthgatewayvillages.org.