

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

National Sheep Industry Improvement Center; Notice of Board Meetings and Public Hearings on Policy Objectives.

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of board meetings and public hearings.

SUMMARY: The Board of Directors of the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center announces three public hearings seeking input on policy objectives to be used in the strategic plan for accomplishing the purposes of the Center. The Board of Directors also announces two Board meetings in conjunction with the hearings. (The Board meetings are open to the public.)

DATES: The hearing and/or meeting dates are:

1. March 26, 1997, 7:30 p.m., Columbus, OH; Board meeting.
2. March 27, 1997, 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Columbus, OH; public hearing.
3. May 6, 1997, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., San Angelo, TX; public hearing.
4. May 7, 1997, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Salt Lake City, UT; public hearing followed by Board of Directors meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Other deadlines are:

1. May 5, 1997, written testimony must be received by the Board on or before date to receive consideration at the May 7, 1997, Board meeting.
2. Written comments should be received by May 16, 1997, to receive consideration in developing the strategic plans.

ADDRESSES: The meeting locations are:

1. Columbus, OH—Ohio State University Fawcett Center, 2400 Olentangy River Road, Columbus, Ohio
2. San Angelo, TX—Texas A&M University, Agricultural Research and Extension Center, 7887 Highway 87 North, San Angelo, Texas

3. Salt Lake City, UT—Airport Hilton, 5151 Wiley Post Way, Salt Lake City, UT

Written comments:

Submit written comments in duplicate to Thomas H. Stafford, Director, Cooperative Marketing Division, Cooperative Services, RBS, USDA, Stop 3252, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20080-3252. Comments may also be submitted via the Internet by addressing them to tstaff@rurdev.usda.gov and must contain "Sheep Industries" in the subject.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas H. Stafford, Director, Cooperative Marketing Division, Cooperative Services, RBS, USDA, Stop 3252, Room 4204, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20080-3252, telephone (202) 690-0368. (This is not a toll free number.) E-mail: tstaff@rurdev.usda.gov. The Federal Information Relay service on 1-800-877-8339 may be used by TDD users.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Sheep Industry Improvement Center is seeking input into policy objectives that will guide the Center's assistance in strengthening the Nation's sheep and goat industries. The board is not looking for specific proposals at this time.

Background

In response to challenges facing the sheep and goat industries, the 1996 Farm Bill established the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center to assist and strengthen the U.S. sheep and goat industries through projects and assistance financed through the Center's revolving fund. The Center will manage a revolving fund of up to \$50 million in Federal funds to facilitate the production and marketing of sheep and goats, and their products.

Treasury has deposited the initial \$20 million into the Center's fund. This fund is capped at \$50 million Federal funds—where authorization was provided for an additional \$30 million in appropriated funds. After 10 years or upon receipt of \$50 million in Federal funds to the revolving fund, the Center and its activities shall be privatized and no additional Federal funds shall be used to carry out the activities of the Center.

The Center is managed by a nine member (7 voting and 2 nonvoting

members), non-compensated board. The seven voting members were chosen by the Secretary of Agriculture from the sheep and goat industries and the two non-voting members from the USDA are the Under Secretary for Rural Development and the Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics. The Board of Directors may use the monies in the fund to make grants, and intermediate and long-term loans, contracts, cooperative repayable agreements, or cooperative agreements in accordance with an annual strategic plan submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture. Funds may be used to participate with Federal and State agencies, other public and private funding sources, and in regional efforts. Funding activities include providing security for, or making principal or interest payments on, revenue or general obligation bond issues, accruing interest, guaranteeing or purchasing insurance for local obligations, and selling acquired assets or loans.

Purposes of the Center

The purposes of the Center are to:

- (1) promote strategic development activities and collaborative efforts by private and State entities to maximize the impact of Federal assistance to strengthen and enhance production and marketing of sheep or goat products in the United States;
- (2) optimize the use of available human capital and resources within the sheep or goat industries;
- (3) provide assistance to meet the needs of the sheep or goat industry for infrastructure development, business development, production, resource development, and market and environmental research;
- (4) advance activities that empower and build the capacity of the United States sheep or goat industry to design unique responses to the special needs of the sheep or goat industries on both a regional and national basis; and
- (5) adopt flexible and innovative approaches to solving the long-term needs of the United States sheep and goat industries.

Public Hearing Procedure

Interested persons may present data, information, or views, orally or in writing, on issues pertaining to the development of a strategic plan for the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center. Those desiring to make formal

presentations should notify the contact person two (2) business days prior to the hearing, and submit a brief statement of the general nature of the evidence or arguments they wish to present, the names and addresses of proposed participants, and an indication of the approximate time required to make their comments. Any person attending the hearing who does not, in advance of the hearing, request an opportunity to speak will be allowed to make an oral presentation at the hearing's conclusion if time permits, at the chairperson's discretion. If more time is needed than currently scheduled, at the discretion of the chairperson, presentations will be limited in time and/or hearing time will be extended. Additional procedures, if necessary for the conduct of the hearing, will be announced at the hearing.

Authority: 7 USC 2008j, Pub.L. 104.130.

Dated: February 28, 1997.

Dayton J. Watkins,

Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

[FR Doc. 97-5748 Filed 3-7-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-XY-P

Rural Utilities Service

Navajo Tribal Utility Authority; Finding of No Significant Impact

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to the potential environmental impact related to the construction, operation and maintenance of the Burnside Junction to Coalmine 115 kV Transmission Line Project proposed by the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA) of Fort Defiance, Arizona.

RUS has concluded that the environmental impacts from the proposed project would not be significant and that the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dennis E. Rankin, Environmental Protection Specialist, RUS, Engineering and Environmental Staff, Stop 1571, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-1571, telephone (202) 720-1784.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed 40-mile transmission line

would extend from the Coalmine Substation located near Tse Bonito, New Mexico (east of Window Rock, Arizona) to tap an existing 69 kV transmission line in the vicinity of Burnside Junction (located west of Ganado, Arizona). The transmission line will be designed and built for 115 kV operation, but will initially be operated at 69 kV. The primary structure type would be H-frame structures located on a 100-foot right-of-way.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and its environmental consultant prepared an environmental assessment report (EAR) reflecting the potential impacts of the proposed facilities. The BIA EAR, which includes input from Federal, State and local agencies and the public, has been adopted as RUS's Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project in accordance with 7 CFR 1794.61. RUS has concluded that the EA represents an accurate assessment of the environmental impacts of the project. The proposed project should have no impact on cultural resources, floodplains, wetlands, important farmland and federally listed or proposed for listing threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat.

Alternatives considered to the project included no action, localized generating facilities, wind and solar generation and alternative routes. RUS has considered these alternatives and concluded that the project as proposed meets the needs of NTUA to provide adequate service to the central section of the Navajo Nation.

Copies of the EA and FONSI are available for review at RUS at the address provided herein; or can be reviewed at or obtained from the offices of NTUA, P.O. Box 170, Fort Defiance, Arizona 86504, telephone (520) 729-5721, during normal business hours.

Dated: March 3, 1997.

Adam M. Golodner,

Deputy Administrator, Program Operations.

[FR Doc. 97-5850 Filed 3-7-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-15-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Institute of Standards and Technology

Board of Overseers of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

AGENCY: National Institute of Standards and Technology Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. app.

2, notice is hereby given that the Board of Overseers of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) will meet on Wednesday, April 2, 1997, from 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Board of Overseers is composed of nine members prominent in the field of quality management and appointed by the Secretary of Commerce. The members of the Board of Overseers will meet jointly with the members of the Judges Panel of the MBNQA. The Board will receive and then discuss reports from the Judges Panel and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) on the Award process. These reports and discussions will cover the following topics: review of roles/responsibilities of Judges and Overseers; status of the 1996/1997 Award Cycles; health care and education award progress; information transfer on winners' responsibility, application trend, and Quest for Excellence IX Conference and regional conferences.

DATES: The meeting will convene April 2, 1997, at 10:30 a.m. and adjourn at 4:00 p.m. on April 2, 1997.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, Administration Building Conference Room (seating capacity 36, includes 24 participants), Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Harry Hertz, Director for Quality Programs, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899, telephone number (301) 975-2361.

Dated: March 3, 1997.

Elaine Buntten-Mines,

Director, Program Office.

[FR Doc. 97-5855 Filed 3-7-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-13-M

Judges Panel of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

AGENCY: National Institute of Standards and Technology, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of partially closed meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. app. 2, notice is hereby given that the Judges Panel of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) will meet on Tuesday, April 1, 1997, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and on Wednesday, April 2, 1997, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The Judges Panel is composed of nine members prominent in the field of quality management and appointed by the Secretary of Commerce. The Judges