

Lundine Puts Emphasis On Rural Issues

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Rep. Stanley Lundine, D-Jamestown, recently emphasized the importance of a comprehensive rural development policy, and stressed the need for continued cooperation between federal agencies and community-based organizations in developing and implementing innovative approaches to rural problems.

"Not since the 1930s have we seen so much attention focused on the needs of rural communities and so many new efforts initiated to meet those needs," Lundine said in an address before the Project Reach annual dinner in Wayland, N.Y.

Project Reach is a private, non-profit organization which works on a multi-county basis to improve rural housing, social services and community development programs.

A disproportionate share of the nation's poor, Lundine said, continue to be found in rural areas, and that rural areas have more than half the nation's substandard housing.

"Given the persistence of poverty, underemployment and substandard living conditions, additional federal assistance will have to be provided and targeted to special rural needs," Lundine said.

He also outlined recently approved legislation which directs the Department of Agriculture to draw up development strategies and to coordinate federal efforts to improve these strategies and talked about recent efforts by several federal agencies to provide new sources of assistance for rural communities.

"The recent trend in federal support for community-based efforts is a healthy one," Lundine said, predicting that the trend will gain momentum in the next few years.