

RAHALL *Report*

RURAL ENTERPRISE ZONES

by Congressman Nick J. Rahall

I have joined an effort in the U.S. House of Representatives, to advance a measure entitled: The Rural Enterprise Zone and Development Act of 1982. As a co-sponsor of this legislation, I am joined by a number of my colleagues who serve with me on the Congressional Rural Caucus.

This bill represents a major step forward to address the concerns of rural America, as being some place special. It is obvious to us all, that just because something works in New York City, it does not mean that it will work in southern West Virginia--therefore lies the need for this initiative.

In the early 1960's, President John F. Kennedy created the Appalachian Regional Commission. Over the years since, federal funds have been sent into our region of the country to reduce its isolation from the rest of the country, to upgrade the economy, and improve the standard of living of our people.

We have made great gains under the programs established by the A.R.C., however, in many ways our region of the nation--as well as other rural areas--have not met their full potential.

The Rural Enterprise Zone and Development Act is an extension of our efforts in Appalachia and throughout rural America. The concept advanced by this legislation pinpoints economic assistance to those areas of greatest need. It will provide grants and loans to spur economic growth, along with tax incentives and credits to promote local businesses.

The Appalachian Regional Commission and the Economic Development Administration began the process of creating a viable economy for Appalachia. I believe this new measure can bring us further down the road toward finishing the job. We have come far from the old adage that the two largest businesses in Appalachia are coal and poverty.

Because of many dedicated and committed people, Appalachia and rural America have been given a new life. The Rural Enterprise Zone and Development Act does not lay a new layer of government on top of another. It instead encompasses what has been started and makes improvements for the betterment of the people.