

RAHALL MEETS WITH BUSINESS LEADERS,

CALLS FOR PROCUREMENT SUMMIT

HUNTINGTON, W. VA. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) today reiterated his call for a statewide summit on how to bring more federal dollars into West Virginia. Rahall wants to bring together the State's Congressional delegation, the leadership of the State Legislature, the Governor, the state's business community, and the appropriate government agencies in a unified effort to attract more federal procurement money to the state.

In a luncheon meeting with Tri-State area business and industry leaders at Marshall University, Rahall noted his goals and motivation in organizing a summit. "Two points have become very clear to me in my efforts to bring more federal money to West Virginia," Rahall said. "First, if we are not careful, we will begin to duplicate our efforts, seeking the same grant assistance as other groups in our state. We cannot afford to compete against each other for the same grants. There is too much competition nationwide to allow ourselves to work against our own best interests."

"Second, other states are already ahead of us in the procurement battle. Not only do we not want to waste precious resources in duplicating our efforts, but we also do not want to be left behind in the ever-quickenening race for procurement funds," Rahall added. "We have to begin thinking in bigger terms, on a state-wide basis. Other states are following this plan of action, and we must be in a position to compete with them to even maintain our present status, as well as to improve our standing in the procurement game."

Rahall has been very active in attempting to attract more procurement dollars to West Virginia's 4th Congressional District through seminars, direct contacts with businesses interested in selling to the government, and even providing a computerized edition of Commerce Business Daily, the daily listing of federal contracts and grants, in his four district offices for businesses to access through his staff.

Rahall will be sending letters of invitation to all key participants necessary to produce a successful effort, asking them to work with him on setting a date and location for a summit. He will be seeking their cooperation in developing a plan for West Virginia to follow in seeking federal contracts and grants. Rahall also welcomes any public input and invites anyone with any ideas or comments to contact any of his four district offices in Beckley, Huntington, Bluefield and Logan.

"I would like to see us formulate a plan in the upcoming months. This will take an extraordinary amount of cooperation, and I am prepared to offer my full commitment and the available resources of my office and staff," Rahall stated. "This is not an insurmountable task, only a necessary one. The people of West Virginia are good, strong people, and we know that we have to work together to bring about progress. I am willing to bring our state together to make tomorrow happen."