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STP PER

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Journal of Agricultural Lending



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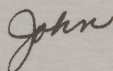
Dear Subscriber,
Over the past year or so I have been writing to you in this column about ABA's rural development efforts. Over the past year the ABA Rural Economic Development Task Force has been meeting to develop proposals for America's rural commercial banks to effect positive change in their communities.

I am pleased to advise you that we've made some real progress. In this issue, you will find Darcy Myers' recent testimony before the Senate Agriculture Committee that outlines five areas where more can be done by the banking community, if some new tools for commercial banks were provided. You also will find the second installment of Dr. Marvin Duncan's excellent article on rural development.

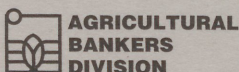
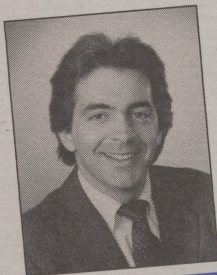
There has been one other extraordinary event very recently that I can't get into the *Journal* because it was on television. At the end of April, President Clinton, Vice President Gore and Secretary Glickman convened a National Rural Conference in Ames, Iowa. The entire five-hour conference was broadcast on C-Span and on ABA's SkyLink. Because of our efforts to advance solid proposals on the question of how rural America can be better served by the commercial banks, ABA Rural Economic Development Task Force Chairman Jeff Plagge was one of the panelists and got the opportunity to hold a dialog with Clinton, Gore, and Glickman. He did an outstanding job of representing the interests of commercial bankers to them. For those of us that watched Jeff on television it was an exciting moment, because with all of the events taking place in the world, an ag banker from Waverly, Iowa, got the undivided attention of the most powerful man on the planet and told him, when it comes to rural development, America's commercial banks count.

If you would like a copy of the ABA Rural Economic Development Task Force Report, *New Tools for Commercial Banks in Rural America*, call me at 202-663-5100 and I will be happy to send it to you.

Sincerely,



John Blanchfield
Publisher



1120 Connecticut Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-663-5000, FAX: 202-828-4544

Agri Finance.

6201 W. Howard St.
Niles, IL 60714
708-647-1200, FAX: 708-647-7055

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John Blanchfield

Managing Editor, ABA

S. Janie Truitt

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Kristine Myszka

Editorial Assistant

Melissa Gottlieb

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