

tea tastings. Tickets for the event are \$18 per person. All proceeds will benefit DUSI projects, including the up-keep and restoration of the "Queen of the Rails" depot. Guests are encouraged to wear hats and gloves. Prizes will be awarded for the prettiest hat, and the most original design. Interested parties may contact the Depot at (989) 288-3561 for further information and to purchase tickets.

Free Mediation Service to Resolve USDA, Loan and Credit Disputes

Michigan farmers and other agriculturists can resolve disagreements with USDA agencies through the Michigan Agricultural Mediation Program (MAMP). The free service also helps farmers resolve farm-related loan and credit disputes. The MAMP is funded by the USDA's Farm Service Agency to give producers and the agencies a

dispute resolution option that is more collaborative, quicker and less costly than hearings or litigation. There is no cost to disputing parties and resolution rates are high. To assure neutrality in mediating disputes, the MAMP is administered by an independent nonprofit organization in Lansing, Dispute Resolution Education Resources, Inc.

Congress established state-based agricultural mediation in the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987. The Certified State Agricultural Mediation Program, as it is formally known, has been reauthorized in subsequent farm bills. The MAMP has offered services since 1997 and is one of 40 such programs across the country. Any USDA clients, or individuals with farm loan or credit issues, who are ready to get started with free, confidential mediation to resolve a dispute, please visit www.agmediation.org, or call (800) 616-7863 and ask for Kate.

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