



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development

World Wide Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ca>

Ben Higgins, State Director

Release No. 33.06

Contact: Sarah Pursley

Office: (530) 792-5801

Cell: (916) 798-9295

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT CALIFORNIA ANNOUNCES RENEWED COMMITMENT TO RURAL FIRST RESPONDERS

PARLIER, Calif., November 14, 2006 – USDA Rural Development (USDA RD) hosted an event focused on the needs of first responders in California’s rural communities at the Parlier Fire Station in Parlier, Calif. The day’s event featured speakers discussing challenges faced by rural first responder agencies and how to utilize the programs offered by USDA RD. Additionally, four checks were presented to grant recipients and police and rescue equipment purchased with USDA Rural Development funds were on display.

At the event, USDA RD State Director Ben Higgins announced his agency’s renewed commitment to first responder needs in rural California. “I am directing my staff to focus community facility funds for police departments, fire departments and personal safety agencies in rural areas,” said Higgins. “We will do everything we can to help you secure the equipment and resources necessary to safeguard and assist the 58 million people living in rural America.”

Since 2001, USDA RD has invested more than \$55 million in California to increase the capabilities of rural first responders. These funds have been used by rural communities for a variety of purposes as indicated by the four communities that received checks. The City of Huron received a \$50,000 grant for the purchase police body armor, portable radios and police car; Orange Cove Fire Protection District received a \$19,525 grant for repairs to their fire station; The City of Parlier received a \$33,000 grant for new computers; and the City of Mendota received a grant for \$21,780 to purchase a sheriff car.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development has invested over \$76 billion since the beginning of the Bush Administration to provide equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. As a result, over 1.5 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at one of California’s 25 local USDA Rural Development offices or by visiting <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ca>.

#

“Committed to the future of rural communities”
United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
430 G Street, Agency 4169, Davis, CA 95616-4169
Telephone (530) 792-5801 Fax (530) 792-5837
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ca>