



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development

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

Ben Higgins, State Director

Release No. 16.08

Contact: Sarah Pursley

Office: (530) 792-5801

Cell: (916) 798-9295

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES ECONOMIC IMPACT GRANTS IN IMPERIAL COUNTY

Nearly \$100,000 delivered to firefighters throughout the county

DAVIS, Calif., June 23, 2008 – Some of Imperial County’s more disadvantaged rural communities received some much needed aid as a result of six Economic Impact Initiative (EII) grants announced today by USDA Rural Development State Director Ben Higgins. The funding, totaling \$97,450 will improve the effectiveness of fire protection agencies in Imperial County.

“These grants reflect our ongoing commitment to ensuring that rural communities have the tools they need to keep people and property safe,” said Higgins. “They make a big difference by providing basic needs, like breathing equipment and emergency vehicles for firefighters. Effective and adequately equipped first responders are an important component of any healthy, vibrant and growing community.”

EII grants are available to rural communities with a not employed rate of greater than 19-1/2 percent to help develop essential community facilities. A primary goal of the EII program is to provide funding for rural first responder agencies. In the last five years, USDA Rural Development has invested more than \$54 million in California to augment the capabilities of first responders in rural areas. These funds have been used by rural communities to purchase, among other critical items, police cars, fire trucks, emergency rescue equipment and communications devices.

In addition to the grants in Imperial County listed below, USDA Rural Development has announced eight other projects totaling over \$225,000 in other rural communities throughout California.

Three grants totaling \$41,950 to the **Imperial County Fire Department** to assist with the purchase of extrication equipment for each of their stations located in Palo Verde, Heber and Seeley.

\$25,500 to **Winterhaven Fire Protection District** to assist with the purchase of an off-road emergency response vehicle.

-more-

Two grants totaling \$30,000 to **Salton Community Services District Fire Department** to assist with the purchase of fire and breathing apparatus equipment, as well as a water tank and pumper equipment for use on an emergency vehicle.

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 \$91 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 1.7 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at one of California's 18 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>