



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development

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

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Release No. 17.08

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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES ECONOMIC IMPACT GRANTS IN FRESNO COUNTY

Over \$80,000 delivered to first responders throughout the county

DAVIS, Calif., June 23, 2008 – Some of Fresno County’s more disadvantaged rural communities received some much needed aid as a result of four Economic Impact Initiative (EII) grants announced today by USDA Rural Development State Director Ben Higgins. The funding, totaling \$82,050 will improve the effectiveness of first responders in Fresno 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 help provide basic needs, like patrol cars for police officers and Jaws of Life equipment 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 Fresno County listed below, USDA Rural Development has announced ten other projects totaling over \$240,000 in other rural communities throughout California.

\$30,000 to **City of San Joaquin** to assist with the purchase of security cameras.

\$30,900 to **City of Parlier** to assist with the purchase of two police patrol vehicles.

\$15,400 to **Fresno County Fire Protection District, Parlier Station** to assist with the purchase of emergency extrication equipment.

\$5,750 to **Fresno County Fire Protection District, Mendota Station** to assist with the purchase of a portable water tank and pump.

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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>.

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"Committed to the future of rural communities"
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