



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development

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

Ben Higgins, State Director

Release No. 2.08

Contact: Sarah Pursley
Office: (530) 792-5801
Cell: (916) 798-9295

A NEW YEAR, A NEW HOME

USDA Rural Development delivers keys to Orange Cove homeowner

ORANGE COVE, Calif., January 16, 2008 – Virginia McCleary opened the door to her new home for the first time today after receiving keys from USDA Rural Development State Director Ben Higgins and Orange Cove Mayor Victor Lopez during a ceremony held outside her residence.

McCleary's old house suffered from a fire resulting in damages including loss of power and gas, and needed to be torn down and rebuilt. McCleary reached out to USDA Rural Development staff in Fresno for assistance and was able to qualify for a Section 502 home loan from the agency. To help reduce expenses, Orange Cove Mayor Victor Lopez and his city council waived all permit fees resulting in a savings of over \$8,000, and Liz Perez of Fidelity Title waived titling fees, saving another \$200. In addition, Mike Garcia of Area Remodeling & Construction agreed to rebuild the home for the amount of McCleary's loan. With help and support from her community, McCleary's new home has now been completed and provides a safe, affordable home for her and her family.

"Today's celebrations are the direct result of an outstanding partnership with the City of Orange Cove and Mayor Lopez," said Higgins. "In the past year, USDA Rural Development has invested over \$70 million in Fresno County of which \$13 million was dedicated to helping families like the McCleary's build and repair their homes."

"USDA Rural Development is the best, and they have done it again in helping Mrs. Cleary realize her dream of a beautiful new home," said Lopez. "It is a great comfort for Mrs. McCleary, who is 79, to know she now has a safe place to come home to."

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>.

#

USDA is an equal opportunity lender, provider and employer

"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>