



# NEWS RELEASE

**United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development**

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

**Ben Higgins, State Director**

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## **GRANTS SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN FRESNO COUNTY**

*USDA Rural Development grants will provide training and assistance to rural entrepreneurs*

FRESNO, Calif., July 8, 2008 – USDA Rural Development State Director Ben Higgins today announced that two local economic development organizations will receive a combined \$185,000 in grants to assist small business owners in rural Fresno County and surrounding areas. Higgins will present the groups, Valley Small Business Development Corporation and Central Valley Business Incubator, with checks at their Fresno headquarters.

Valley Small Business Development Corporation will use their \$125,000 Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) to help small businesses located in the rural communities of Orange Cove and Parlier access capital. It is anticipated that this assistance will result in an additional ten to 30 jobs. Nearby Central Valley Business Incubator has been selected to receive a \$60,000 grant to implement distance learning courses for small business owners in Fresno, Kings, Madera and Tulare counties. The business training seminars are expected to result in five new businesses and ten new jobs.

“Small businesses are the backbone of our rural economies,” said Higgins. “With these funds, we are supporting those who are showing the entrepreneurial spirit and drive to succeed that makes for successful families, neighborhoods, and communities. I’m excited to leverage these organizations’ proven ability to foster that entrepreneurial spirit and create good jobs in this critically important region of California.”

USDA Rural Development’s RBEG funds are available to rural communities, non-profit corporations and tribes for projects that strengthen the economic conditions of rural areas through business and job development and training as well as project planning.

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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