



United States Department
of Agriculture

Rural Development

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News Release

For Immediate Release
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USDA GRANTS PROMOTE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN RURAL INDIANA *Madison Innovation Receives Funding*

Madison (04-11; 4-1-04): USDA Rural Development today presented a \$300,000 USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant to representatives of the Madison Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation. The grant is designed to support the Foundation's innovative plan to spur economic growth in rural Indiana through the creation of a certified community kitchen at the Venture Out Business Center (VOBC).

USDA Rural Development State Director Robert White presented David Hertz, Chamber Foundation President with a check for the grant today at a gathering at the Center, 975 Industrial Drive. White said, "The VOBC kitchen is an innovative way to give local entrepreneurs a way to develop new products and markets for Indiana agriculturally based products."

Jeff Garrett, Executive Director of the Chamber Foundation, explained that the kitchen, the first of its kind in Indiana, will be an innovative tool for the economic development of southeastern Indiana. It will be used to assist agricultural entrepreneurs in producing, developing and selling food. Small Business Development Center staff and kitchen staff will be on hand to offer clients guidance in marketing, financial planning, loans, food processing and project development.

Garrett commented, "Food Venture will be an inspected (FDA standards) food product processing kitchen containing state-of-the-art equipment for preparing, cooking, filling, labeling, flash freezing and cooling. We will also have full-time staff on-site to provide assistance with development of recipes and production processes in order to offer the most delicious and cost effective food production. The bottom-line is that Food Venture will provide the facilities and services for successful food product businesses."

This latest grant is one of several recently awarded by USDA statewide to boost economic development in rural communities. Other recipients are: Purdue University was selected to receive \$1 million to establish an Agricultural Innovation Center that will assist rural businesses, farmers and ranchers develop value-added businesses through greater utilization of production agriculture commodities.

Other recent USDA grants were awarded to the Great Lakes Pork Cooperative, \$280,000, to operate a producer owned pork-processing facility in northern Indiana; Putnam Bio-Products, LLC, \$25,250, for background work for Bio-Refinery concept to produce ethanol and other co-products; Beef Ventures Group, LLC, \$70,000, to study a beef processing system for Niche Markets, for the small to medium size cattlemen; and \$175,000 to the Indiana Rural Development Council to establish a Indiana Cooperative Development Center that will provide technical assistance to start-up and existing cooperatives, increase public awareness of the value of cooperatives as a means for boosting farm income, and provide mentoring designed to enhance the growth and success of cooperatives in Indiana.

"These grants are in keeping with the mission of USDA Rural Development which is to provide equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure." said White. "USDA is committed to improving the quality of life in rural Indiana. When rural Indiana makes progress, all of Indiana benefits."

Single family home loans, rural rental housing, water and waste water facility funding, business and industry loans, and community facility loans and grants are financial resources available from USDA Rural Development. Questions concerning these services in this area can be directed to USDA Rural Development, 1981 S. Industrial Park, Suite 4, Versailles, IN 47042; phone 812-689-6410, extension 4.