

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 20, 2009

CONTACT: Maril Alsup Stockwell
Public Affairs Specialist
(413) 253-4314
Maril.Stockwell@ma.usda.gov

CONGRESSMAN COURTNEY & USDA OFFICIALS VISIT LOGEE'S TROPICAL PLANTS

Congressman Joe Courtney joined USDA Rural Development State Director, Jay Healy today at *Logee's Tropical Plants* in Danielson for a tour of the Logee's facility. The visit was prompted by USDA Rural Development's announcement of over \$500,000 in loan and grant funds for the northeastern Connecticut based nursery.

The federal funds – distributed as a \$391,310 loan guarantee and a \$195,650 grant - were awarded to Logee's via USDA Rural Development's Renewable Energy for America Loan & Grant Program (REAP) which provides grants and loan guarantees to rural small businesses and agricultural producers to make energy efficiency improvements to their facilities. Logee's will use the funds to create an energy efficient four-bay, gutter connected greenhouse which will replace ten older, freestanding greenhouses and utilize the most up-to-date designs and systems to maximize energy conservation.

Logee's has been a family owned business since 1892. Current owner and manager, Byron Martin is the grandson of the founding owner and has thirty-five years experience running the nursery. He gives national lectures and seminars on growing tropical plants and is often featured as a horticulture expert on Martha Stewart's TV program.

The new greenhouse at Logee's is designed as a gutter connected facility, which improves energy efficiency up to 20% over traditional, freestanding greenhouses. Careful consideration has also been given to the construction materials used. The covering for the greenhouses was designed for maximum heat retention as well as light intensity for plant growth. Additional energy efficiency will come from the inclusion of an insulated knee wall surrounding the structure. The passive ventilation system that will be installed in the new greenhouse will also reduce electrical costs. The largest energy savings will come from the operation of dual energy/shade curtain systems. These curtains, made of woven Mylar strips, retract during daylight hours for maximum light exposure and close after sunset to drastically reduce the heat historically lost from such greenhouses.

Logee's also received a \$49,990 grant from the Connecticut Ag Viability Project for their greenhouse improvements.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. USDA Rural Development fosters growth in homeownership, finances business development, and supports the creation of critical community and technology infrastructure. USDA energy efficiency programs often yield double-digit energy savings. Additional information on the Rural Energy for America Program may be found at www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/bprogs.htm.

###