



USDA Rural Development Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2000



Focus on Southern New England



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

On behalf of the Clinton-Gore Administration, Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman and Under Secretary Jill Long Thompson, I am pleased and proud to present the 2000 Annual Report for the Southern New England jurisdiction. This report details our mission area's activities in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island.

When I was appointed by President Clinton to be State Director for the Farmers Home Administration in 1993 the agency was primarily a lending agency. Over the past eight years the agency has seen dynamic changes with the shift to Rural Development where we now form partnerships with town governments, state agencies and non-profit organizations. These unique collaborations help build more vibrant rural communities that give citizens a greater sense of pride, better public safety services and a chance to access the prosperity our nation has witnessed under President Clinton's leadership.

Fiscal Year 2000 funding in the three state jurisdiction reached \$103 million, bringing the total investment during this administration to \$872.6 million. Although FY 2000 represents a decrease in funding from previous fiscal years our offices have done a commendable job effectively utilizing limited resources to provide safe housing to rural families, to support dynamic businesses in an ever-changing economy and to construct water and sewer systems in rural towns that faced a threat of contamination.



We have faced some tough challenges over these last eight years and I am very proud to say that we have overcome them to make a difference in the lives of thousands of rural Americans. I am proud to have been a part of this agency and it is with great pride that I reflect on the work we have done and the partnerships we have created and I hope they will last long after this administration has past.

Is Rural Development making a difference? I invite you to peruse the following pages. You will see images of young families making a fresh start with the help of our rural housing funds. You will see local, state and federal leaders-of both political parties-at groundbreaking ceremonies for libraries, town halls and police stations funded through the Community Facilities program. You will see a commitment to outreach that is growing our service area and providing a more diverse rural population with essential services and programs. Is Rural Development making a difference? I think you will see that between the dedicated and committed efforts of our terrific staff, our partners in the non-profit and private sectors, and leaders in state and federal government-the answer is a resounding yes-we are! Thank you for this great opportunity.

Handwritten signature of Will H. Bradley

OUR PROGRAMS

USDA Rural Development is committed to helping improve the quality of life in all of rural America. Our programs offer a diverse rural population access to safe drinking water, affordable housing, hi-tech jobs and modern community facilities that provide solid foundations for rural families to build on.

Community Facilities-Focuses on strengthening the basic infrastructures of rural towns by funding projects like libraries, senior centers and town halls. Funds may also be used to upgrade public safety equipment.

Business Programs-Enhances the business climate in our jurisdiction's rural towns through direct loans and grants and partnerships with private lending institutions with an emphasis on helping the rural workforce compete in today's high-technology market.

Water and Waste-Provides loans, grants and loan guarantees for drinking water, sanitary sewer, solid waste and storm drainage facilities in rural areas and cities and towns of 10,000 or less. Public bodies, non-profit organizations and recognized Indian tribes may qualify for assistance. Grant funds are also available to nonprofit organizations which pledge to provide technical assistance and training to rural communities to solve water, wastewater and solid waste problems.

Housing-Provides loans and grants to assist rural citizens in achieving the dream of homeownership. Programs are also available to assist developers with a focus on multi-family housing units to house low-income citizens and the elderly.

More than **\$103 million** was provided to rural communities, non-profit organizations, Indian tribes, families and individuals in the Southern New England jurisdiction in the Fiscal Year 2000.

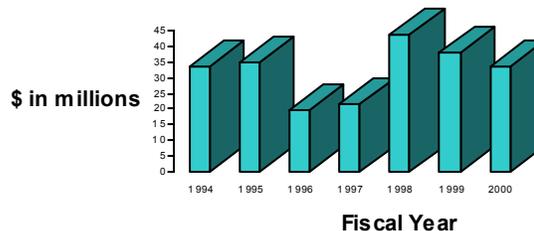
Because of this federal funding small businesses have a fighting chance to compete in today's volatile markets, senior citizens have a place to gather and reflect, single mothers have access to affordable housing and rural families can turn on their faucets without having to tap into their deepest anxieties.

Total 8 year investment in the Southern New England jurisdiction is \$872.6 million.

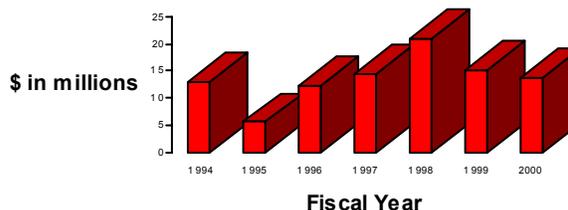
Massachusetts Activity



Connecticut Activity



Rhode Island Activity



On March 5, 1974 Beatrice Baynes, an aging widow with 16 children, applied for the American dream. With a little help from the federal government she turned that dream into a reality on August 13, 1974.



**Total housing funding
in the Southern New
England jurisdiction
reached more than
\$46 million in FY
2000 helping 602
rural
citizens build new
foundations for their
dreams.**

Mrs. Baynes applied for a \$19,000 loan from the USDA Farmers

Home Administration, now USDA Rural Development. Her dream was to build a modest 26x36 ranch on 4 acres of rural property in Canterbury, Connecticut. At the time of her application, her son Ronald had just graduated from West Point, her daughter Roberta was on her way there. Her son Donald had served one year in Vietnam. Her son Ernest was killed there. Her remarkable story, of loss and triumph, did not go unnoticed by Rural Development.

Mrs. Baynes' application was accepted under the Rural Development Section 502 Direct Loan Program. Administered by the Rural Housing Division, this program provides direct financial assistance, in the form of a direct home loan, to hard-working individuals or families, like Mrs. Baynes.

Mrs. Baynes, now 86, submitted her final payment on the loan to Rural Development on February 7, 2000. State Director William H. Bradley joined officials in Canterbury at the Town Hall for a mortgage burning ceremony. Rural Development is honored to have had the opportunity to help such a strong woman achieve her dream of homeownership.

State wide in the FY 2000 we helped 207 rural residents secure safe, sanitary and decent housing with more than \$18.2 million in funding.

OUR HOUSING PARTNERS

HELPING US HELP OTHERS

State Director William H. Bradley joined Paul Douglas, executive director of Rural Development Inc. (RDI) MA, at the Stebbins on



of Turners Falls, home of Nicole June 16 to celebrate the partnership between the non-profit group and Rural Development. With the help of Rural Development funds, RDI has helped 37 families move into new homes.

As a result of successful partnering efforts with state agencies, private lenders and non-profit corporations, 51% of the homes in the Fiscal Year 2000 were jointly financed. This brought in an additional \$4.2 million of other funds and an additional \$9.5 million of agency funds to the jurisdiction.

National Homeownership Week

June 3-10, 2000



Assistant State Director Bill Gouzounis presents Lynn Blackwell, senior vice chairperson of the Connecticut Housing Investment Fund

Board of Directors, with a Rural Development appreciation plaque for the non-profit groups help in servicing low-income residents in Connecticut's rural communities June 8, 2000 at the home of Domnikiya and Aleksandr Glybin in Somers.



BUSINESS

HELPING THE RURAL WORKFORCE
COMPETE IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Rural Business Enterprise Grants

Grant funds, offered from Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, turned a former DOT garage into a boat building facility in Haddam, CT. Since 1999

USDA Rural Development has awarded more than \$50,000 in grant funds to the project.

It has helped: Relive the history of the community by recreating the art of hand crafted boats. Promote tourism on the beautiful Connecticut shoreline



the



A \$78,000 RBEG helped support the Franklin County Community Development Corporation and its plan to start a commercial kitchen in Greenfield, MA. Executive Director John Waite (l) stands with State Director William H. Bradley (center) and State Senator Stan Rosenburg at the dedication ceremony. The commercial kitchen will allow businesses

to rent the facility on a time-share basis instead of investing in expensive equipment and has the potential to generate new revenues for agriculture and specialty food producers in the area. The kitchen will help small businesses in western Massachusetts be more competitive by saving them money and will help local farmers by expanding their local market for their produce. Consumers will also benefit by having more choices. RD funding for this project complements \$464,000 in state funds from the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture.

More than \$25 million was provided in the Southern New England jurisdiction to help the rural workforce compete in the diversified economy of the 21st Century. Recipients of these programs may include individuals, corporations, partnerships, cooperatives, public bodies, nonprofit corporations, Indian tribes and private companies.

COOPERATIVE NEWS

A \$3.9 million loan guarantee, obligated in September to CoopPlus, of Holyoke, MA, was offered under the aegis of Rural Development's Business and Industry (B&I) Loan Guarantee



The Southern New England jurisdiction made its first Business and Industry Loan Guarantee to a cooperative in the FY 2000. The \$3.9 million loan guarantee, with funds provided by First International Bank of Hartford, CT, will help support local consumers.

Program. The focus of the program is to improve the business climate in rural areas of less than 50,000 in population. The loan was made by First International Bank of Hartford, Connecticut, which has been USDA Rural Development's partner in helping rural businesses since 1995.

This is the first USDA Rural Development loan guarantee made to a cooperative in the Southern New England jurisdiction. The funds were used to purchase three existing fuel oil companies, Halon Oil of Granby, Express Oil of Southampton, and Lacasse Heating and Cooling of Holyoke. It is anticipated that 43 jobs were maintained and 11 jobs were created. By leveraging Rural

Development funds with money from commercial sources, like First International Bank, we are able to provide improved and more extensive service to the rural citizens of Southern New England. Rural Development is proud to be a part of such an effective partnership that combines the efforts of several community-focused organizations to help consumers in western Massachusetts.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

PROVIDING PUBLIC SAFETY AND TOWN RESOURCES
AT AN AFFORDABLE COST TO THE RURAL TAX PAYER



State Director William H. Bradley (*left*) joined local and state officials representing the Town of Rochester, MA to

celebrate the Town's receipt of a \$1.05 million Community Facilities loan. The 10-member police force is currently housed in a 14 x 50 trailer and the communications center is located in a 200 sq. ft. area of the fire station. The funds will be used to construct a 3500 sq. ft. facility. The new building will be handicapped accessible.

Our community facilities programs accounted for \$9.5 million of our total funding in the Southern New England Jurisdiction bringing essential public safety equipment, town halls and libraries, like this one in West Boylston, MA to rural communities across the three-state jurisdiction.

Two Community Facilities loans- \$260,000 and \$100,000 in FY 1999

and 2000 respectively-assisted in the renovation of the historic Ivoryton Playhouse in



Essex, Connecticut. The playhouse has been a treasure of Southern Connecticut since 1908.

WATER AND SEWER

**BECAUSE CLEAN WATER
SHOULDN'T BE A LUXURY IN
RURAL SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND**

water 2000

In July, we celebrated *Water 2000* with programs with this big check signing in Warren, MA. Congressman Richard Neal (MA-2nd) (2nd from left) joined the



Our Water and Waste programs accounted for more than \$21 million in loans and grants bringing safe water to rural communities across Southern New England.

Rural Development team at our event to celebrate the Towns receipt of \$760,000 in loan and grant funding. The funds will be used to extend the existing public water system to the Heritage Village Mobile Home Park, which is privately owned. The park has private water and sanitary waste disposal and has faced severe problems. In 1997, the septic system failed and effluent contaminated the wells. With the generous support of USDA Rural Development, the Town of Warren has agreed to extend its water system to the mobile home park. Citing the high risk of drinking water contamination from the failing septic system, Warren was targeted as a rural community needing assistance under the aegis of President Clinton's Water 2000 program.

earth day 2000



William H. Bradley and Congressman John Olver (MA-1st) present the Pine Valley Plantation, a low-income village for senior citizens, with funds to connect to the Town of Belchertown's sewer system.

WORKING WITH OUR NATIVE AMERICAN NEIGHBORS

The National Congress of
American Indians
identifies four federally
recognized tribes in the
Southern New England
jurisdiction.

In FY 2000 the West Wareham, MA
USDA Rural Development area office
approved a \$28,050 Community
Facilities grant to the **Wampanoag
Tribe** for a water storage tank to assist
with fire fighting functions.

Also in FY 2000 the Warwick, RI
USDA Rural Development Area
Office approved two Community
Facility grants totaling \$97,500 to the
Narragansett Tribe for safety repairs
and other renovations to the "Four
Winds" Tribal Community Center.

Rural Utilities Service Deputy
Administrator John Romano (center)
attended the Native American Indian
Housing Council Convention and
Trade Show at Foxwoods Resort and
Casino in Ledyard, CT on June 12,
2000.

Rural Development Manager



Johan Strandson (left), of the
Norwich area office, and Native
American Coordinator Richard
Burke, of the Amherst state office,
also attended the conference which
brought together representatives
from federally recognized Indian
Tribes from across the country. It was a
pleasure to have Mr. Romano with us to
support our outreach efforts with our
Native American partners.

Notable Events in 2000

Secretary's 54th Annual Honor Awards June 5, 2000-Washington, D.C.

Deputy Administrators Art Campbell (far left) and Inga Smulkstys joined Rural Development Manager Tom McGarr (2nd from right) and Native American Coordinator Richard Burke when they were presented with a Superior Service Award at the 54th Annual USDA



*Congratulations!
Inga Smulkstys*

Awards Ceremony. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman made the presentations. The citation reads *"For sustained outreach to the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) resulting in increased business and program delivery to our Native American Partners."*

Rural Development officials joined the National Weather Service to present Connecticut Governor John Rowland with an important device to help curb disaster in the State. With the winter storm season at New England's doorstep, RD and the NWS presented the State of Connecticut with an emergency weather radio.



(l-r) CT Deputy Com. of Agriculture Bruce Greczyk, Chief Meteorologist at the NWS Bob Thompson, CT Governor John Rowland, Norwich RDM Johan Strandson, and PIC Margot Susca at the governor's office Nov. 28.

The delivery of emergency weather radios is part of a

partnership created between the USDA, the Department of Commerce and the NWS to provide greater access to emergency radio service to the rural areas of Southern New England.

Warnings about severe weather conditions can be obtained 24 hours a day, providing increased preparation time for rural citizens in the event of an approaching storm. The radios provide for instant access to the same weather reports and emergency information that meteorologists and emergency personnel use information that might save property and, more importantly, lives.

Weather radios were also sent to Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Rural Development Manager in the Warwick, RI area office Dave Delisle participated in an event with the Lt.



Governor of Rhode Island to help increase awareness about weather radios and how they can help protect the rural peoples in Rhode Island.

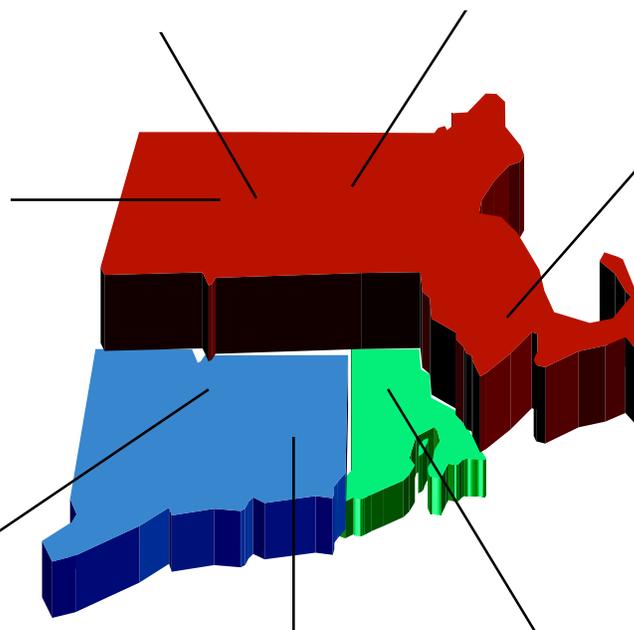
These two events should prove to us that effective partnerships with state agencies can stretch limited federal resources and bring increased visibility to programs that have the potential to save lives.

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