

The USDA logo features the letters "USDA" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Below the text are three horizontal green lines of varying lengths, suggesting a landscape or fields.

Committed to the future of rural communities.

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Awards More Than \$1 Billion in Electric Loans to Strengthen Infrastructure in Rural Communities.

“Missouri shares in \$237,316,000 of Funds to Assist Rural Customers”

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that 37 rural utilities and cooperatives in 29 states have been selected to receive more than \$1 billion in loans to build and repair more than 10,000 miles of distribution and transmission lines and make system improvements that will benefit 60,000 rural customers.

"President Obama is delivering on his commitment to invest in rural America's infrastructure by funding upgrades to rural utilities and cooperatives," Vilsack said. "Rural communities need affordable up-to-date electric service in order to broaden economic opportunities. These loans will enable cooperatives to deliver improved service to more customers."

These investments help rural electric cooperative utilities continue to provide reliable and affordable electric power to their communities. Rural electric cooperatives are nationally-recognized as leaders in energy efficiency and demand management practices. To date, 402 rural electric cooperatives have used USDA Rural Development's Energy Resources Conservation program to increase energy efficiency, conservation and demand management initiatives.

The funding is being provided through USDA Rural Development's Electric Programs which provides loans and loan guarantees to help utilities, cooperatives, states and local governments provide or improve electric service in rural areas. The Electric Program also helps finance energy conservation and renewable energy systems.

For example, the West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., in Higginsville, Mo., will receive a \$12.9 million loan to build and make improvements to distribution facilities. The cooperative provides electric power service to 14,000 customers in west central Missouri. Sac Osage Electric Cooperative, Inc. in Eldorado Springs serving southwest Missouri will receive \$5,500,000 for their 11,000 metered customers and United Electric Cooperative, Inc. in northwest Missouri will receive \$18,951,000 for their 10,000 metered customers. All three rural electric cooperatives will use loan funds to build electric distribution facilities and provide improved and dependable service to their communities.

Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. is also receiving \$200 million in funding for improvements to the generation and transmission systems that serve distribution cooperatives across Missouri as well as parts of Iowa and Oklahoma.

Funding of each loan recipient is contingent upon the recipient meeting the conditions of the loan agreement. For a complete recipient list, visit <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom/>.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development fosters growth in homeownership, finances business development, and supports the creation of critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA Rural Development's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

“Committed to the future of rural communities.”

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