

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COLUMBUS RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENT BENEFITS FROM STIMULUS MONEY

Bismarck, February 26, 2010 – USDA Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider today is recognizing the Columbus Rural Fire Department during the 2010 State Fire School Training at the Civic Center in Bismarck.



State Director Jasper Schneider (left) presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Columbus Rural Fire Department for their dedication to saving lives and property within their community. Receiving the plaque on behalf of Columbus Rural Fire Department are Daniel Peterson, Fire Chief and President of the Board (second from left) and Keith Thelen, Secretary-Treasurer (second from right). Looking on is Alisha Dahl (right).

Through the Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Columbus Rural Fire Department was awarded a grant for \$64,050 and a loan for \$8,100 to purchase a new 4-door extended cab Wildland Firefighting Vehicle. Total price tag comes to \$84,000 with other funding leveraged with applicant contributions.

"Our volunteer fire departments are on the front lines their community," said Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider. "It is good to see efforts being made to enhance public safety and improve our citizens' lives in rural communities."

The Columbus Rural Fire Department has been in existence since January 1980. With a fire truck 25 years old, increased oil activity in the area and the increased demand for additional fire fighting services, the need for an additional fire truck was critical.



The Wildland Firefighting Vehicle is a custom built 4-door extended cab with a 400 gallon water tank and a 10 gallon foam tank. Additional equipment includes a mobile radio and new bunker gear for 13 volunteer fire fighters, also purchased with stimulus funds.



"This project we recognize today further demonstrates the Obama Administration's goals and efforts to rebuild and revitalize the nation's rural communities," continued Schneider. "The Wildland Firefighting Vehicle will allow the Columbus Rural Fire Department to improve their response time, while saving the lives and property in the community."



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>.

In Fiscal Year 2009, USDA Rural Development provided \$56.4 million in housing programs, \$79.7 million in business and community programs, and \$647.1 million in electric programs to North Dakota citizens.

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