

## USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT JOINS THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER

**FARGO, N.D., March 1, 2010** – Today during a state-wide meeting of Rural Development employees in Fargo, N.D., USDA Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider is awarding a grant for \$16,032 to Great Plains Food Bank (GPFB).



A Community Facilities Cooperate Grant for \$16,032 was presented by Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider to Great Plains Food Bank, located in Fargo, during a state-wide meeting of Rural Development employees.

Pictured at the check presentation ceremony are (l to r) Don Warren, Rural Development; Melissa Sobolik, GPFB; Steve Stellant, GPFB; and Jasper Schneider, Rural Development State Director.

Hunger in America is not a new phenomenon. With high unemployment and the recession, with demand for food rising to near crisis proportions, many are going without...many must make difficult choices...food or medicine; food or electricity; food or the mortgage/rent. The statistics are staggering. One in 12 North Dakotans seek emergency food assistance each year, and nearly half of those seeking help are children.

Food Bank will be used to cover costs incurred

by personnel providing guidance and supervision identifying needs, resources and partners and assisting food pantries across the state increasing the opportunities for food pantries to better serve their clients.

“Everyone at Rural Development is proud to partner with Great Plains Food Bank,” Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider said. “Employees wanted to show their support by donating non-perishable food and personal items for agencies that help those in need. There is no better demonstration of spirit than when people give their time and resources to help those less fortunate.”

Rural Development employees recognize how fortunate they are to work for an agency that has such a positive impact on rural communities. Each day employees see first-hand the ways in which Rural Development’s programs and services improve the quality of life for those who need them the most.

“We are so pleased to partner with USDA Rural Development to conduct regional meetings of emergency food programs around the state,” says Melissa Sobolik director of member and client services for the Great Plains Food Bank. “We are able to provide our partners



Non perishable food items and non-food items were donated to the Great Plains Food Bank by USDA Rural Development employees during a Rural Development state-wide meeting in Fargo.

with training and networking opportunities that have never been done before. It means so much to our partner agencies, and will ultimately make their programs stronger.”

The Great Plains Food Bank was organized in 1983 to recover surplus products from the food industry and distribute to a small network of feeding programs serving the hungry and homeless in the Fargo-Moorhead area. Today, with the help of hundreds of food donors and thousands of volunteers and financial supporters, the GPFB distributes five million pounds of food annually to an extensive network of over 220 charitable feeding programs across North Dakota. The Great Plains Food Bank is a member of Feeding America – the nation’s largest food bank – and is the only Food Bank serving the state of North Dakota. Since its inception, the GPFB has received and distributed food for more than 68 million meals.

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.

#