

COUPLE STAYS IN HOME

“National Homeownership Celebrated”

Drayton, June 24, 2009 – USDA Rural Development has been making home loans since 1949 and is celebrating “Homeownership Month” during the month of June. The theme for 2009 Homeownership is “Preserving Homeownership.”

During this National Homeownership Month, Rural Development recognizes that all American families deserve the opportunity to achieve the American Dream. Just as we are committed to keeping American families in their homes, we are also committed to helping new homeowners purchase their piece of the American Dream.



(L-R) Jenny Gjovik, Rural Development Specialist; Ardis Olson, Mayor of Drayton; Donald Warren, Acting State Director for Rural Development; Pete and Helen Byzewski, Homeowners; Julius Wangler, Executive Director, Red River Regional Council; and Andy, Adamson, County Commissioner of Pembina County.

Today, a Drayton couple, Peter and Helen Byzewski, 108 North Third Street, are being recognized by Rural Development and its partners.

The Byzewskis received a grant for \$15,525. The monies were used to install vinyl siding to their home, install an energy efficient window, and repairs to plumbing fixtures.

“Rural Development’s home loan program provides various funding sources for families and individuals also for very low income homeowners to make essential repairs to their homes making them more energy efficient and also removing any health hazards,” said Donald Warren, acting state director for USDA Rural Development. “This is an opportunity for us to assist the greatest generation to be able to continue living safely in their homes and in their communities.”

It all began in the fall of 2007 when the Drayton city auditor Carol Gardner, and the staff from Red River Regional Council, along with Rural Development, set up an office day in Drayton to promote rural Development’s home repair program. Connie Johnson, Senior Citizens Center,

pushed hard for seniors to attend this office day. She felt many could use some financial assistance to help them make repairs to their homes in order for them to continue living in their homes.

Because the response was overwhelming, Rural Development got the ball rolling by awarding a \$50,000 preservation grant to the Red River Regional Council, with a matching Community Development Block Grant from the N.D. Department of Commerce. The Federal Home Loan Bank contributed \$160,000 and the City of Drayton was able to offset some of the administrative costs. The monies were earmarked to assist eligible homeowners with repair/replacement of storm doors, adding energy efficient windows, electrical, plumbing, water and waste water systems, furnaces, water heaters, roofs, and providing accessibility for persons with disabilities.

In Fiscal Year 2008, USDA Rural Development provided **\$38.1 million** in housing programs, **\$54.7 million** in business and community programs, **\$577.5 million** in electric programs, and **\$17.9 million** in telecom programs to North Dakota residents.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has invested more than \$111 billion since 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than two million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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