

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT NEBRASKA

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USDA Funds Water Project for Big Springs

North Platte, Nebraska, January 30-USDA Rural Development announced today, the awarding of \$636,000 in loan and \$792,000 in grant funds to the Village of Big Springs to be used for a water improvement project benefiting the Village's 418 residents. The improvements will ensure the delivery of safe and dependable water services to Big Springs and will bring the Village's water system into compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Roberta Mues, rural development specialist for USDA Rural Development commented, "Big Springs lost two wells from the drought of 2000, leaving the community with two remaining wells, one of which is likely under the influence of surface water and susceptible to potential contamination." "The Village's storage facilities and control system also pose a problem as both are no longer reliable nor meeting the needs of the Village."

Big Spring's four wells were put into service in 1946, 1960, 1971 and 1972. The existing water distribution system was constructed around 1927 with the 50,000 gallon elevated water tower being constructed with the original water system. The manually operated water tower has no controls connecting the wells to the tower and lacks the desired fire storage or pressure head for the water system. In 1987 several of the water mains were replaced, leaving that part of the water system in good condition.

Community Development Block Grant funds of \$250,000 will accompany USDA's \$1.4 million for an estimated project cost of nearly \$1.7 million. The USDA Rural Development loan will be repaid over 40 years at 4.5 percent interest. Improvements to be made with the funding include the development of two new wells including pumps, well houses, and radio controls; the construction of a 100,000 gallon water tower; placement of transmission main from the wells to the system; and the installation of new distribution mains for improved system circulation. Test wells were drilled in Big Springs and to the north with a feasible well field being located 5 miles north of Big Springs.

USDA Rural Development is a credit arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture whose mission is to provide financial assistance to rural communities who are unable to secure acceptable credit elsewhere for housing, community facilities, and business development. Assistance provided can be in the form of grants, direct loans, and guarantees on loans made by commercial lenders.

USDA's funding for the Big Springs water project is through the USDA Rural Development Water and Wastewater Loan and Grant Program. For information contact Bert Mues in the USDA Rural Development Office, 1202 S. Cottonwood North Platte, Neb. 69101 or phone (308) 534-2360. Website: www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne/.

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