



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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**USDA CELEBRATES EARTH DAY WITH OVER \$100 MILLION IN COMMUNITY  
WATER/WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE LOANS AND GRANTS**

WASHINGTON, April 22, 2003 – In recognition of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day, Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced the selection of 45 rural water and wastewater community infrastructure projects in 29 states to receive investment funding totaling over \$105 million. The fund assists rural communities address health and environmental issues and promotes business development. This year's Earth Day theme, "Action for a Healthy Environment" encourages Americans to heed President Bush's call to be good stewards of the land and life around us.

"Today's investments will help protect our environment and improve the quality of life for many rural residents throughout rural America," said USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas Dorr. "President Bush has proclaimed 2002-2003 as the ["Year Of Clean Water."](#) The President's proclamation recognizes the importance of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Clean Water Act and called upon all Americans to serve by 'setting good examples of environmental steward-ship in our daily lives."

Funding for the projects is comprised of \$37.2 million in loans and \$68.3 in grants that will build and improve rural water and sewage systems enabling rural communities to benefit through cleaner water, recreation and wildlife resources. Included in the funding are Technical Assistance and Training (TAT) Grants and Solid Waste Management Grants. TAT grants go to nonprofit organizations to provide technical assistance and training to associations on a wide range of issues relating to the delivery of water and waste disposal services. Solid Waste Management grants are made to public and private nonprofit organizations for providing



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technical assistance and training to associations to reduce or eliminate pollution of water resources and improve planning and management of solid waste facilities.

“We must be vigilant in protecting our rivers, lakes, and streams from pollutants caused by improper treatment of wastewater,” said Nebraska State Director Jim Barr of USDA Rural Development. “We have a responsibility to future generations to be mindful of the way we treat our environment.”

Funding was announced today in Cook, Nebraska for a sewer improvement project totaling over \$1.1 million. USDA Rural Development will assist in this project with a \$480,200 loan and \$207,100 grant. Community Development Block Grant monies of \$250,000 from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and \$100,000 in loan and \$100,000 in grants derived from the State Revolving Fund will provide the balance of the funding.

"The improvements slated for Cook's sewer system will ensure safe and dependable sanitary sewer services to the 333 residents of Cook and will bring greater protection of their rural environment," stated Janice Stopak, rural development specialist for USDA Rural Development.

Cook's collection system consisting of clay pipe, dates back to 1946 and is no longer meeting the needs of its community. The system is experiencing excessive infiltration and inflow problems causing overloading of the lift station and lagoons. The lift station receives all the wastewater flows from the collection system and pumps it to the lagoon. The pumps are undersized and cannot handle inflow thus causing sewage backups and improper discharging of effluent from the Village's three-cell lagoon system. The lift station is at the end of its useful life with significant maintenance costs and replacement parts that are difficult to find. The original design was for complete retention. The original lagoon piping does not allow for such discharge

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and needs to be modified. With the change in level of water in the lagoons, this has resulted in deterioration of the lagoon liner and significant erosion to the dikes.

Improvements to the village's sewer system consist of replacing the lift station and collection lines, dredging the sewage lagoons to increase available storage area, and riprapping the lagoons around the top to protect brims from wind and water erosion.

A complete list of the selected loan and grant recipients and projects can be found at:  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/newsroom/news.htm>

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. Rural Development is Rural America's Venture Capitalist. Providing equity, liquidity, and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on these and other 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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