



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Rm. 152 Federal Building 100 Centennial Mall North Lincoln, Neb. 68508
(402) 437-5551 (Phone) (402) 437-5093 (TDY) (402) 437-5408 (Fax)

Lennis Hodgson, USDA Rural Development-Rural Development Manager

Kearney, Nebraska (308) 237-3118

Jim Lewis, President of Hitchcock County Agricultural Society, Inc.

Culbertson, Nebraska (308) 278-2675

HITCHCOCK COUNTY AG COMPLEX OPENS ITS DOORS

Culbertson, Neb., January 7--The Hitchcock County Agricultural Society, Inc. held a grand opening today for the \$340,000 Hitchcock County Ag Complex. The new building will bring to the 3,750 residents of the county, an exhibit hall and a community center. USDA Rural Development, who funded the structure, presented a symbolic funding check to the Society in celebration of the complex's completion.

"We are proud of the Hitchcock County Ag Complex for what it offers and what it means to the community and surrounding area," stated Jim Lewis, president of the Hitchcock County Agricultural Society, Inc. "We are appreciative to USDA Rural Development for the funds they provided which made this complex possible and will help to strengthen our rural Nebraska county."

The Hitchcock County Ag Complex is a 60 x 120-ft. steel building located on the Hitchcock County Fairgrounds. It offers handicap accessible restrooms, 4,500 square feet of exhibit space, office area and a serving kitchen. The complex replaces the current 4-H, open class, and restroom buildings, which were no longer functional in meeting the needs of the community.

President Lewis stated that exhibitors and supporters of the Hitchcock County Fair will now be afforded an air-conditioned atmosphere, offering a better environment to enjoy the exhibits. Both the 4-H and Open Class exhibits will be housed in the complex that will help to build momentum for the two programs and give that true "good old county fair" feeling. Additionally, the complex will provide a year round climate controlled facility for Extension and 4-H programs. The building will be a great place for everyone in the county and the entire area to hold meetings, banquets, or auctions as well as wedding receptions or celebrations. With a 250 person capacity and a "caterer friendly" serving kitchen the building will be ideal for large functions while the large meeting room will suit smaller scaled gatherings.

"Residents will no longer have to go outside the County to find facilities large enough to hold their social and cultural events as well as their meetings," stated Lennis Hodgson, rural development manager for USDA Rural Development. "The complex provided the residents of Hitchcock County with the most cost effective means to upgrade their fairground facilities and will prove to be a vital asset to the county in the years to come."

USDA Rural Development Community Facility loan funds of \$240,000 and grant monies of \$100,000 were used for the demolishing of the existing building and the construction of the new complex along with related professional costs. The loan funds will be repaid over 40 years at 4.625 percent interest.

Interested parties desiring to rent the Hitchcock County Ag Complex should contact Jim Lewis at 308-278-2675.

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