



**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)

Glen Gatz, USDA Rural Development-Rural Development Specialist

Kearney, Nebraska (308) 237-3118

Gary Bomberger, Mayor of Oconto

Oconto, Nebraska (308) 858-4914

OCONTO COMMUNITY CENTER MAKES A COME BACK

Oconto, Neb., July 19-- Making their way back from the storm, the Village of Oconto was pleased to host an Open House today for its newly completed 3,500-sq. ft. community center. Oconto lost their center and library in October of 2000 to a tornado. The new facility, serving as a hub to its 147 rural residents, will house the Village's public library, community center, and senior center. Local, state and federal monies totaling over \$370,000 financed the new building.

"Oconto is extremely pleased to have a community center once again. We have worked long and hard to recover our community to where it was before the tornado hit a few years ago. Strong community support and pride and the financial assistance received have made this significant recovery possible," stated Gary Bomberger, mayor of the Village of Oconto.

USDA Rural Development presented a \$103,000 symbolic grant funding check to the Village at the Open House, signifying USDA's financial commitment to the center. Community Development Block Grant funds of \$165,000 from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development along with a \$104,500 contribution from the Village comprised the balance of the funding.

"Communities need a gathering place for celebrations, reunions, senior activities, and the like to keep residents interconnected in their community," stated Glen Gatz, rural development specialist for USDA Rural Development. "We are very pleased to have been able to assist Oconto in the rebuilding of their community."

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