



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
Rm. 152 Federal Building • 100 Centennial Mall North • Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: (402) 437-5563 • Fax: (402) 437-5408 • TDY: (402) 437-5093 • Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne>

Janice Stopak (402) 423-9683, Ext. 4

Community Memorial Hospital Secures Rural Development Loan --Brings 6 Year Commitment to Quality Rural Healthcare to \$5.7 Million

Syracuse, Neb., March 3, 2008—Nearly \$5.7 million from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development has, through the years, revitalized and expanded Community Memorial Hospital in Syracuse; delivering improvements that help bring quality rural healthcare to the residents of Otoe, Cass and Johnson counties.

“Community Memorial Hospital has worked hard over the years to continually build upon their hospital and services. I commend them for their recent loan funding of \$726,000 for the acquisition of new computers and software. This technology will enhance medical record keeping and bring improved delivery of information between the hospital and adjoining clinic,” stated Nebraska State Director Scot Blehm, USDA Rural Development.

Community Memorial Hospital is familiar with Rural Development’s Community Facilities Direct Loan program. In 2003, a \$950,000 loan remodeled the radiology area, kitchen, dining room, medical records and patient waiting area. Additional loans in 2004 and 2005 totaling \$750,000 renovated the emergency room, physical therapy, administration offices, and cardiac rehab area. In 2006 a wellness area and hydro pool for rehab joined the facility through a \$700,000 loan. Last year, Rural Development awarded a \$2.6 million loan that constructed the 5,500 sq. ft. medical clinic, and 4,600 sq. ft. hospital addition linking the clinic and hospital. A maintenance building and additional parking were also made available.

"Over the last several years, USDA Rural Development loans have been invaluable in allowing Community Memorial Hospital to continually expand and enhance our services. This latest loan, for a new computer system, will put us on the cutting edge of information technology," stated Hospital Chief Executive Officer Mike Harvey, Community Memorial Hospital. “When the project is finished, we will not only have greatly improved financial reporting capabilities, but also electronic patient medical records. This capability will greatly assist us in our continual quest to improve quality healthcare for our patients, as electronic medical records enhance timeliness and accuracy of care.”

USDA Rural Development’s Community Facilities program offers financing to eligible participants in rural areas in the form of loans, both direct and guaranteed, and grants for rural health care facilities and essential equipment, including first-responder equipment. Projects vary in both project size and scope—from hospitals to medical clinics, assisted living facilities, mental health centers, and various types of rehabilitation centers.

-more-

Committed to the future of rural communities.

“USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.” To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Projects such as those of Community Memorial Hospital, help further the Bush Administration's Critical Access Hospital (CAH) Initiative to provide rural Americans with access to primary and preventive health care services. A CAH is a hospital that is certified to receive cost-based reimbursement from Medicare. The program is designed to support limited-service hospitals located in rural areas. To qualify for CAH status, a hospital must meet certain criteria, such as be located in a rural area, provide 24-hour emergency care services, and have average patient stays of 96 hours or less. Since January 1, 2004, CAHs could operate up to 25 beds for acute inpatient care, subject to the 96-hour average length of stay for acute care patients.

For additional information contact Janice Stopak, (402) 423-9683 Ext. 4, (402) 437-5093 (TDY); janice.stopak@ne.usda.gov; 8000 South 15th Street, Suite E, Lincoln, Neb. Visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne/>.

#