



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-0700

Phone: (202) 260-0996 • Fax: (202) 720-0483 TDD: (202) 720-6382 • Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>

Krista Stevens (402) 423-9683 Ext. 128
Vicki Schurman (402) 437-5563

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT BOOSTS NEMAHA COUNTY HOMEOWNERSHIP

Auburn, Neb., June 18, 2008— Russell T. Davis, Administrator of Rural Development's Housing and Community Facilities Programs, and Rural Development staff celebrated National Homeownership Month today in Auburn with two local homeowners who seized their opportunity to "Own Their Future." These individuals were able to buy homes as a result of the effective partnering of housing resources.

"Homeownership enables households to invest in their future, brings a sense of community and stabilization to neighborhoods and promotes a healthy living environment to building strong, rural communities," Davis said. "Rural Development and its' housing partners work diligently together in bringing affordable housing to more individuals and families. Affordable housing supports the economic development that is vital to rural communities."

Carl Wisheart came to Southeast Nebraska Developmental Services (SENDS)/Region V, with the clothes on his back and a dream that would eventually lead him down a path to homeownership. Wisheart resided in a basement apartment in the small, rural community of Auburn, Nebraska. He obtained employment in the community, learned to do household chores and to pay bills. This arrangement proved beneficial for Wisheart, yet he longed to achieve the American Dream of buying a home.

SENDS initiated and assisted in the USDA Rural Development direct home loan process for Wisheart knowing it would be a perfect fit. Rural Development provided a loan of \$60,528; Southeast Nebraska Community Action (SENCA) furnished homebuyer education, and secured \$4,000 in down payment and closing costs assistance from the Federal Home Loan Bank through the First Down program operated by the Nebraska Housing Developers Association. Wisheart independently took on much of the preliminary preparations necessary which included working with the inspectors, repairmen, utility companies, and real estate agent.

"I am so excited and happy with the opportunity of owning a house!" Wisheart said.

The 972 square foot Wisheart residence consists of three bedrooms and one bath with an enclosed front porch, central air, new carpet, and new furnace. Living in this small community allows him to remain active in the community and in many organizations and to pursue his hobbies.

Hollie Burgert joined SENDS/Region V and spent a few years living in extended family homes in Auburn and Brownville, Nebraska. Although happy with her accommodations, Burgert

--more--

Committed to the future of rural communities.

"USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender."
To file a complaint of discrimination write 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).

decided that it would be nice to return to Auburn where she had family and friends and to where she worked two part time jobs.

USDA Rural Development assisted Burgert through a homeownership loan of \$31,125. The loan came to fruition with the help of SENDS who coordinated the process. SENDS was diligent in helping Burgert to transition into homeownership. Southeast Nebraska Community Action (SENCA) provided homebuyer education, and secured \$3,000 in down payment and closing costs assistance from the Federal Home Loan Bank through the First Down program operated by the Nebraska Housing Developers Association. Local Realtors, family, and staff of SENDS helped facilitate the process including finding a home perfect for Burgert.

Burgert contributes to her community through homeownership. Her charming, two bedroom, one bathroom, 728 square foot home located near the downtown of Auburn, provides her easy access to work. Auburn will most likely be the place she continues to live, do business in, hold a job in, and to continue to enjoy as the place she calls her home.

“I love having a place to call my own. I enjoy having family and friends over for dinner and have put a lot of time and thought into turning my house into a home,” Burgert said.

“Congratulations Carl Wisheart and Hollie Burgert. You have achieved the American Dream of homeownership through your hard work and commitment,” Nebraska State Director Scot Blehm, USDA Rural Development said. “I applaud the dedicated efforts of all the housing partners who played a role in helping to bring affordable housing to Carl and Hollie. Rural Development looks forward to future opportunities to working with you to make more households homeowners.”

Region V Services serve people with developmental disabilities and similar needs. Services are provided to approximately 850 people throughout sixteen southeast counties. There are twelve area programs in Auburn, Crete, David City, Fairbury, Lincoln (5 programs), Nebraska City, Wahoo, and York. "Satellite" programs are in Beatrice, Columbus, Hebron, and Seward as well as numerous services provided in smaller communities throughout the area. Services include a full range of individual supports from job coaching and in home supports that are staffed at all times. The agency focuses on personal outcomes, trying to determine what each individual desires in their lives and helping them to accomplish their goals. To date, USDA Rural Development has provided assistance to four Region V client households for home purchases in Auburn.

Last year USDA Rural Development afforded 536 households the opportunity of homeownership through \$39.9 million delivered via the direct and guaranteed homeownership loan programs.

Contact the USDA Rural Development office in Lincoln at (402) 423-9683; or 8000 South 15th Street, Suite E, to discuss Rural Development housing programs. Visit: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne>.