



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES \$11.5 MILLION IN RURAL BUSINESS GRANTS

WASHINGTON, June 4, 2008 – Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas C. Dorr today announced the selection of 70 rural communities and Native American organizations in 24 states to receive \$11.5 million in economic development grants.

“These grants will help rural communities save or create more than 1,726 jobs and spur economic development,” Dorr said. “USDA is proud to work with local community leaders to help fund enterprises that improve the quality of life for rural residents.”

The funds are being provided through USDA Rural Development’s Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) and Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) programs. The RBEG program provides funding to finance or develop small and emerging private businesses. The RBOG program finances training and technical assistance for business development.

For example, near Grainger County, Tenn., funds will be used to support River Place, an ecotourism project located along the Upper Clinch River in East Tennessee. In particular, the project involves enhancing a conservation retreat center that will accommodate tourists for bird watching, canoeing, hunting, fishing, and arts and crafts.

In Nebraska, the Indian Center, Inc., plans to use USDA Rural Development funds to establish a “Native American Business Support Center” to provide technical assistance and support to existing and potential Native American business in Scotts Bluff county. In addition, the Indian Center will provide a training program titled, “Worlds of Work” in eight locations around the state. In First Mesa, Ariz., funds will be used to conduct a feasibility study and business plan for an assisted living facility at the IHS Hopi Health Care Medical Campus.

A complete list of grant recipients is available on the USDA Rural Development web site at www.rurdev.usda.gov. Funding for individual recipients is contingent upon their meeting the conditions of the grant agreement.

USDA Rural Development’s mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has invested more than \$90 billion since 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than 1.7 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on 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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