



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

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FORTENBERRY HELPS USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT DELIVER OVER \$3.4 MILLION TO RURAL NEBRASKA

BEATRICE, Neb., October 21, 2008 – United States Congressman Jeff Fortenberry and USDA Rural Development Nebraska State Director Scot Blehm presented ceremonial checks today to 7 recipients totaling \$3,415,544. The funds will enhance distance learning capabilities; furnish dependable and potable water, increase energy efficiency and foster renewable energy.

“USDA Rural Development assists rural Nebraskans in a number of ways,” Fortenberry said. “Communities across southeast Nebraska will benefit from increased educational opportunities and reliable water systems. Small business owners will use energy efficiency and renewable energy grants to enhance their operations, save money and resources, and grow Nebraska’s capacity as a renewable energy leader.”

Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Recipient:

Educational Service Unit No. 5-Beatrice-\$315,031 will provide for upgraded equipment and allow member schools to upgrade local area networks for distance learning sessions to be accessed as a plug-and-play application in classrooms. Participating schools will have broadened access to distance learning opportunities through installation of a new Multipoint Control Unit that allows schools to connect to dissimilar systems outside their network. Counties served are Gage, Fillmore, Johnson, Otoe, Pawnee, Richardson, Saline, Sarpy, Seward, Thayer, and Washington.

Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Recipient:

Lower Big Blue NRD-Beatrice-\$3,054,000 (loan of \$1,426,000 and grants of \$1,628,000) to develop a rural water system in Gage County. The NRD will contribute \$149,000 towards the project. The system will provide a dependable supply of potable water for 128 rural users and 21 users in Holmesville. The City of Wymore will be the water source for the system.

Energy Grant Recipients:

Breakaway Coffeehouse, LLC-Beatrice-\$14,671- Roof, lighting, and HVAC improvements.

Mike Bauman-Beatrice-\$4,364-Convert from propane engine to electric.

Earhart Chiropractic, P.C.-Beatrice-\$4,631-Replace HVAC and lighting.

Loren Huls-Pickrell-\$18,247-Convert from diesel engine to electric.

C-Minus, LLC-Auburn-\$4,600-Purchase 1.7 kW Skystream wind turbine.

“USDA Rural Development is committed to delivering the funding needed to help rural communities to succeed and remain strong,” stated Blehm. “We are pleased to report a record year in project funding which means more dollars pumped into Nebraska to keep its’ rural communities viable. I applaud the recipients here today and their active participation in securing the funding needed.”

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In Fiscal Year 2008, USDA Rural Development delivered more than \$189.8 million to rural Nebraska. Housing funds delivered totaled \$70.6 million, community facilities \$11 million, utilities \$22.4 million, business \$18.9 million, telecommunications \$51.3 million and electric \$15.6 million.

Contact USDA Rural Development (402) 437-5551, toll free 800-670-6553, or (402) 437-5093 (TDY).

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