



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

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CONGRESSMAN SMITH AND USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT DELIVER FUNDS TO RECIPIENTS IN KEITH AND PERKINS COUNTIES

OGALLALA, Neb., October 23, 2008 – United States Congressman Adrian Smith and USDA Rural Development Nebraska State Director Scot Blehm presented 4 ceremonial checks today totaling \$1,473,202 and recognized a local business. The funds will expand distance learning capabilities, increase energy efficiency, create business expansion and provided for homeownership.

“Nebraska has long been known as the home of the Good Life,” Smith said. “The future of our rural communities will be formed by the hard work and innovation of our community leaders. These projects will help strengthen our communities, and I commend all involved for their efforts to improve Nebraska.”

Distance Learning Grant Recipient:

Educational Service Unit #16-Ogallala, Neb.-\$391,840 will be used to implement the 21st Century Distance Learning Classroom Project. Interactive distance learning will serve 32 end-user sites providing for simultaneous distance learning classrooms for students, opportunities for community members to take college courses, and offer professional development opportunities to teachers in remote rural districts of Nebraska. Counties served are Chase, Dundy, Furnas, Hayes, Hooker, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, Perkins, Red Willow, and Thomas.

Energy Grant Recipients:

Collin Malmkar-Grant, Neb.-\$11,665-Convert from diesel engine to electric.

Ag Star Inc.-Grant, Neb.-\$7,103-Convert from diesel to electric motor.

In Fiscal Year 2008, Keith County saw 15 households become homeowners through \$1,062,594 in guaranteed loans. Ogallala guaranteed rural housing lenders who helped to achieve this accomplishment were: **Adams Bank and Trust, Pinnacle Bank; and Valley Bank.** Through the Guaranteed Rural Housing Loan program, private lending institutions provide the funds which are guaranteed by the federal government.

Recognition was given to **Trinity Enterprises, Inc. of Ogallala**, owned by Nathan and Nicole Holthusen who own the local True Value Hardware store. Holthusens’ teamed up with Adams Bank & Trust to utilize the premiere USDA Rural Development Business and Industry (B&I) Guaranteed Loan program. The B& I program is utilized by lenders and rural businesses across Nebraska to assist in job retention and expansion efforts.

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Committed to the future of rural communities.

“USDA Rural Development is an Equal Opportunity provider, employer and lender.”

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“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 utilizing and securing the funding needed.”

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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