



Committed to the future of rural communities.

# USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

WINTER 2011

Wisconsin

# DEVELOPMENTS

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### Mission:

To increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for all rural Americans.

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## President Obama Visits Wisconsin Manufacturers Revitalized with USDA Guaranteed Loan Support

*Judith Canales, Administrator for USDA Rural Development Business and Cooperative Programs, assisted by Mark Brodziski, USDA Rural Development Business and Community Programs Director in Wisconsin.*

President Barack Obama visited three businesses in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, this week on the heels of the State of the Union address. The main event was his address to the employees of Orion Energy Systems Inc.

Orion designs and produces energy management systems consisting primarily of high-performance, energy efficient lighting systems and controls. Their core line is a high intensity fluorescent lighting system that produces twice the quantity of lighting at one-half the electricity usage compared to standard lighting systems. The company also manufactures solar day-lighting products

and distributes solar light tubes.

President Obama also visited Skana Aluminum Company, an aluminum rolling mill, and Tower Tech Systems, a manufacturer of towers for wind turbines. In addition to the companies' entrepreneurship, innovation, and clean energy initiatives, he recognized their importance of job creation. Orion has added 200 employees since 2003 and Skana Aluminum, a start-up in 2010, expects to employ 80 by the end of the year. In his address at Orion, the president noted that Orion and Skana Aluminum had received assistance from the USDA.

Both Orion and Skana Aluminum received loan guarantees through the USDA Rural Development, Business and Cooperative

Services, Business & Industry (B&I) Program. Orion obtained their B&I guaranteed loan in 2004 and Skana Aluminum in 2010.

The B&I guaranteed loan to Skana Aluminum was part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (Stimulus Bill), which provided businesses over \$1.6 billion in B&I guaranteed loans, nation-wide. Skana Aluminum purchased and restarted the shuttered plant in July 2010. Initially, Skana Aluminum projected to create 43 jobs with an average hourly wage of \$26.00/hour. Skana began production of aluminum coils and made their first shipments at the end of July 2010. Skana currently has 63 employees, exceeding initial projections by 20 employees.

Orion and Skana Aluminum are manufacturing companies. The companies are great examples that demonstrate the benefits of the B&I Guaranteed Loan program. They have established and maintained credit relationships with local community banks, Hometown Bank and Community Bank & Trust, respectively, on the performance and growth of their businesses. Through their bank relationships they accessed the B&I Guaranteed Loan program



President Barack Obama tours Skana Aluminum Company, an aluminum manufacturer and rolling mill in Manitowoc, Wis., Jan. 26, 2011. (Official White House Photo by Samantha Appleton)

Continued on back page

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### USDA Rural Development Future Notices of Funding Availability

*The following notices are anticipated within the next 30 days:*

#### **538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program:**

This USDA Rural Housing Program guarantees loans under the Rural Rental Housing Guaranteed loan program for development of multi-family housing facilities in rural areas of the United States. Loan guarantees are provided for the construction, acquisition, or rehabilitation of rural multi-family housing. Eligible applicants include; a U.S. owned corporation, a limited liability corporation (LLC) or a partnership

#### **Multi-Family Preservation and Revitalization Program (MPR):**

The USDA Rural Development Multi-Family Preservation and Revitalization Program is a demonstration program developed to create revolving loan funds for the revitalization of aging projects and to preserve the affordability of projects. Eligible

applicants include private non-profit organizations, or their affiliate loan funds, and State and local housing finance agencies.

#### **Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants, (514 & 516):**

The USDA Rural Development Farm Labor Housing Loan and Grant Program provides financing to build, buy, improve or repair affordable rental housing for both year-round and migrant, domestic farm laborers.

*Anticipated within the next 60 days*

#### **515 Rural Rental Housing Program for New Construction**

#### **Housing Preservation Grant Program (HPG)**

#### **Super Green Program**

**To view all Notices, visit:**

**[http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD\\_NOFAs.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD_NOFAs.html)**

### Current Notices of Funding Availability

#### **Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLG):**

USDA Rural Development is currently accepting applications for loans and grants under the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program. The REDLG program provides funding to rural projects through local utility organizations to help increase economic productivity, job creation, and incomes in rural areas. Projects may include business start-ups and expansion, community development, incubator projects, medical and training projects, and feasibility studies.

**Complete applications must be received by close of business on March 31, 2011 for 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, and June 30, 2011 for 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter.** For further details about eligibility rules and application procedures, visit <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2011/pdf/2011-3198.pdf>

#### **Single Family Housing Program Updates:**

##### **DIRECT HOME LOAN PROGRAM:**

- Funding under the Continuing resolution has been limited.
- National Office continues to work with Congress to address the limited funding.
- Special emphasis has been placed on serving applicants in the 50% or less median household income area (very low).

##### **Guaranteed Rural Housing Program:**

- Program has adequate funding
- WI has funded nearly \$85 million through 685 loans this fiscal year.
- Million Dollar Lender achievements for FY 2010 will be announced shortly.

### Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Announces Investments to Study Renewable Energy Feasibility in Rural Communities

*Jan. 20, 2011 –* Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that USDA Rural Development has selected for funding 68 study grants nationwide, to determine the feasibility of renewable energy projects.

Funding is made available through the Rural Energy for America Program under the 2008 Farm Bill.

"The projects announced today will provide rural small businesses and agricultural producers

the opportunity to conduct feasibility studies for renewable energy system installations. These investments will not only help our farmers and small businesses reduce energy costs, but also help find renewable alternatives to generate energy," said Vilsack.

In Wisconsin, The Farm Custom Work, LLC, in Caledonia, Wis, has been selected to receive a \$21,500 feasibility study grant. This project will determine the viability for an on-site anaerobic

digester to process food waste for the generation of energy.

REAP loan guarantees and grants can be used for renewable energy systems, energy efficiency improvements, feasibility studies and energy audits. More information on the REAP program, which was authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill, is at: [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_ReapGrants.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_ReapGrants.html).



## Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Announces Investments In Essential Rural Community Facilities

“These projects will bring lasting improvements that are essential to maintaining strong rural economies and vibrant communities as we work to win the future,” Vilsack said. “Preserving the infrastructure in rural areas is one of many ways that USDA assistance helps create and retain jobs.”

The Community Facilities projects to be funded by USDA Rural Development total nearly \$70 million. The program funds facilities for public use in rural areas, including health and child care centers, hospitals, medical clinics, assisted-living facilities, fire and rescue stations, police stations, libraries, community centers, public buildings and transportation. Through this program, USDA ensures that such facilities are available to all rural residents. More information about USDA Rural Development can be found at [www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov).

*February 11, 2011* – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced investments in projects in 24 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to improve rural community facilities such as schools, health care facilities, libraries, and first responder services and equipment.

The city of Mineral Point, Wis., has been selected for a loan and a grant to renovate a library. A preliminary architectural report has indicated that mold in the building is a health and safety concern and is jeopardizing some of the oldest documents in the state of Wisconsin.



## Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Announces Funding To Increase Educational and Health Care Access in Rural Communities

*Jan. 24, 2011* - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that 106 projects in 38 states and one territory have been selected to receive more than \$34.7 million in grants to fund educational projects and expand access to health care services in rural areas through USDA's Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program.

"Too many rural areas cannot take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by broadband for improved education and health care. These funds will help communities enhance their educational and training programs and deliver improved health care services for their residents," Vilsack said.

Wisconsin grant recipients include:

**Cooperative Education Services Agency Number 5 - \$176,877**

**Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System - \$255,597**

**Aspirus Health Foundation, Inc. - \$486,707**

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program (DLT) is designed specifically to meet the educational and health care needs of rural America. Through loans, grants and loan/grant combinations, advanced telecommunications technologies provide enhanced learning and health care opportunities and access to education, training and medical resources for rural residents.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Announces Support for Rural Electric Improvements to Benefit Thousands of Customers in Rural America

Nov. 18, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that 50 rural utilities and cooperatives in 31 states were selected to receive guaranteed loans that will benefit more than 183,000 rural electric cooperative consumers by financing the construction and repair of over 15,000 miles of distribution and transmission lines, including over \$310 million invested in renewable energy.

"USDA's investment in electric systems will finance reliable and affordable electric power to homes and business in rural America," Vilsack said. "Affordable



rates and reliable service are essential to rural economic development by encouraging businesses to locate or stay in rural areas."

The \$2.9 billion is funded by USDA Rural Development's Rural Utilities Service. This funding assists with upgrades, expansion, maintenance, and replacement of rural America's electric transmission, distribution lines and generating equipment. The Electric Program also helps fund energy conservation and renewable energy projects.

Two projects have been funded in the State of Wisconsin.

Clark Electric Cooperative, in Greenwood, Wis., was selected for \$4,000,000 in a loan guarantee for system improvements. The project will also update and add distribution lines on the system, serving nearly 530 new and existing customers.

A loan guarantee of \$20 million for Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative, based in Lancaster, Wis., will finance the addition and upgrades of distribution lines to better serve customers in both Wisconsin and Illinois. This project is expected to provide service to nearly 700 new and existing customers.

### Multi - Family Housing Programs Update:

#### Multi-Family Housing Civil Rights Training:

The National Office is designing a Web-based training course for Owners/Managers, and, in particular, Site Managers. This Training will address a number of compliance issues recently found in reviews and complaints.

Course includes:

- 2 hour course
- 16 live sessions across the nation, held on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Roll-out in May and June
- Civil Rights staff will be apart of each session
- Registration required and can accommodate 500 attendees per class
- More information on registration and materials is forth coming

#### Section 538 Program Highlights:

After almost a year, the continuous Guarantee Regulation for the Section 538 Program was published on January 3, 2011 in the Federal Register, Volume 76 on pages 1-5.

This new option for our lenders provides a construction guarantee immediately upon closing of the construction loan with the guarantee remaining in place during and after the permanent financing is in place without any additional agency requirements upon entering the permanent financing phase. Under the current regulations the program required an updated appraisal upon conversion from the construction to the permanent loan phase. The new regulation also adds a continuous guarantee option. This new option provides lenders and developers continuous guarantee coverage during the construction phase through the permanent phase without any additional agency requirements imposed prior to the permanent financing, including a new appraisal.

**Coming Soon:** *New updates to the National Multi-Family Housing Website to enhance transparency*

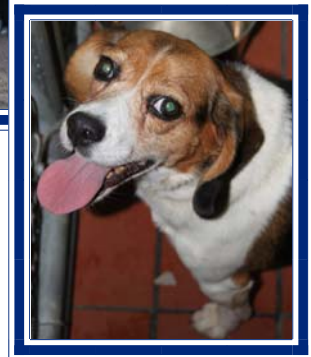
#### USDA Rural Development Welcomes Newest Member of the State Office Multi-Family Housing Team, Bob Hernandez

Hernandez joined USDA Rural Development approximately four years ago in the Fond du Lac Area Office where he has been working in the capacity of Multi-Family Housing Technician. Hernandez's initial responsibilities in the State Office will concentrate on Farm Labor housing and Troubled Account Services Liaison to Office of General Council and US Attorneys.

**PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

**November 10, 2010—South Wood County Humane Society Grand Opening**

An updated and improved temporary home for animals in need in Wisconsin Rapids officially opened when South Wood County Humane Society (SWCHS) cut the ribbon celebrating the new facility. USDA Rural Development provided an \$88,700 Community Facility Grant toward the funding of the project. The humane society purchased an existing building, remodeled and added onto it to create the new animal shelter at a cost of \$550,641, including the grant.



**November 18, 2010 - Partnership to Progress Forum . . . a Celebration of Value-Added Producers**

In FY 2010, USDA Rural Development awarded more than \$2.27 million in Value-Added Agricultural Producer grants to producer-owned projects in Wisconsin. For the third year in a row, Wisconsin led the nation in both the number of USDA Rural Development Value-Added Producer grants awarded and dollars received. The event showcased stories of success from producers and businesses grant recipients and facilitated a roundtable discussion on value-added agriculture and local foods initiatives.

**October 29, 2009 - Pigeon Falls Health Care Center Holds Grand Opening for Newly Remodeled Facility**

The Pigeon Falls Health Care Center received a USDA Rural Development Community Facility loan and grant combination, totaling \$834,000 through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009. Funds were used towards several upgrades, including new furniture for the facility, expanded capabilities, and increased services.



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### December 8, 2010 - Household Abuse Victims Emergency Network (HAVEN, Inc.) Grand Opening of New Shelter and Office Facility :

HAVEN, Inc's new facility has adequate space to provide shelter to 24 individuals/families, and allows HAVEN, Inc. to meet the needs of walk-in clients, while maintaining confidentiality of those in residence. HAVEN, Inc. was awarded a \$100,000 USDA Rural Development Community Facility Grant. Grant Funds were used toward the purchase of furnishings and equipment for the new shelter building .



### December 9, 2010 - Custom Cabinetry and Furniture, LLC. awarded Certificate of Achievement :

USDA Rural Development awarded Mike Striegl of Custom Cabinetry and Furniture, LLC a \$19,837 Rural Energy for America Program grant for the installation of 60 solar panels and two inverters for green energy generation. Additional funding for the project came from a Focus On Energy grant for \$16,826. The solar power will not only supply all their power needs, but also allow the sale of excess power to the utility, Alliant Energy.

### January 28, 2011 - State Director, Stan Gruszynski , is Keynote Speaker at the Mid-west Value Added Conference:

USDA Rural Development was a sponsor for the 2011 Midwest Value-Added Agriculture Conference entitled "Cultivating Farm Profitability". More than 300 participants from Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin attended the event. This conference allowed opportunities to meet a diverse group of people who are changing the face of agriculture in the Midwest and throughout the Nation—how they grow, raise, make and market products to satisfy a changing demand in the consumer base.



### Community Programs Git-R-Done 2010 Award:

The Git-R-Done Award is a Traveling Award that is presented annually to a Community Programs Specialist for outstanding accomplishments. The 2010 Git-R-Done award goes to the **Stevens Point Area Office**, Julie Giese and Barb Brewster.

- The Stevens Point Area Office obligated more than \$20 million in water and waste loans and grants, this represents 29% of the \$69,048,653 total dollars received by Wisconsin.
- In Community Facilities, obligations in Stevens Point totaled \$7,550,750, representing 33% of the \$22,825,773 total dollars received by Wisconsin.
- The Stevens Point service area received over \$27 million in CP loan and grant dollars in 2010.

## 2010 Employee of the Year Awards

The Employee of the Year Award is the top award given by Wisconsin USDA Rural Development to its employees. It is an opportunity for us to recognize our peers for their accomplishments and successes.

USDA Rural Development employees nominate co-workers and an awards committee reviews the nominations and recommends selected nominees as award recipients to the State Director, who then makes the final award selections.

The committee looks for individuals who exceed in their job; promotes the entire Agency; works as a team player; is flexible, creative, helpful, and enthusiastic about their job. Members of the committee who are nominated is asked to leave the room when their category is reviewed. The recommendations are presented to the State Director for concurrence and final decision.



### STATE OFFICE SUPPORT STAFF - JUDY CLENDENNING, BC&P TECHNICIAN

Judy is a key employee in the delivery of the Rural Business Services programs. The 2010 fiscal year has been a banner year, and Judy is an instrumental team player in assisting five B&CP Loan Specialists with accomplishing their workload. Judy has volunteered to assist in various outreach events, is always willing to put forth the extra effort and time to ensure deadlines are met, and is a pleasure to work with.

Luann Sliwicki, State Office Housing Technician; and Carrie Jones, State Office Housing Clerk, were also nominated for this award.

### FIELD OFFICE SUPPORT STAFF - LAURIE THOMACK, AREA TECHNICIAN, SHAWANO OFFICE

Laurie's drive and determination along with her work ethic plays a large part in the achievements of the Shawano office. Laurie takes every opportunity to learn about the other programs and to help in any way. Laurie is very efficient, helpful, professional, and courteous in all her duties. Laurie is a bright spot in the Shawano Area Office. She has a constant smile on her face and brings a positive attitude each day.

Roxy Martzke, Shawano Area Office Area Technician; and Kim Peterson, Stevens Point Area Office Area Technician, were also nominated for this award.



### FEILD OFFICE PROGRAM SPECIALIST - JENNIFER SCHENK, AREA SPECIALIST, SHAWANO OFFICE

Jennifer consistently personifies the characteristics of an exceptional employee. She handles each new challenge with professionalism and grace. Jennifer is constantly promoting Rural Development in the community. She is the definition of a team player. Jennifer's knowledge of the programs she works with are endless and she is always willing to share her knowledge, training, and experiences.

Julie Giese, Stevens Point Area Office Area Specialist; and Sharon Olson, Stevens Point Area Office Area Specialist, were also nominated for this award.

### DIRECTOR / MANAGER - CAROL WETUSKI, DODGEVILLE AREA DIRECTOR

Carol is someone that stands out with her ability to present an issue, engage in a spirited discussion, considering many angles of the topic, ponder the subject for a day or two and come to resolve with the outcome. Carol is a creative thinker, willing to step outside the box. She is not afraid to stand on her principles when it is important to the cause, even if that, at times, means standing apart from her colleagues. Carol is an exceptional representative of the Agency, role model to her direct reports, and a support system to her peers.



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*Continued from front page:*

and used the program to establish a foundation for long-term debt financing that enables them to concentrate

Orion's growth and success affirms the president's initiatives of "winning the future" through innovation. Skana Aluminum is a perfect example of a new company that has located into an existing manufacturing facility that was no longer in use. They turned it around and reinvigorated the site with a new business that produces high quality goods and services.

Through these successes, the two companies demonstrate the opportunities in our rural communities when they recognize the value of their community assets and workforce resources, develop active entrepreneurship, and work together with community, regional, state, and federal partners.

To read this and other USDA Rural Development project success stories [click here](#).



*President Obama greets Thomas Testwuide, part owner of Skana Aluminum.*

### USDA Rural Development Launches new Wisconsin Website:



New look with same valuable information. The new website now links directly to the national USDA Rural Development web pages and information. Check it out: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi)

### USDA Rural Development Wisconsin State Office Bids Farewell to Long Time Director

*Brodziski Accepts New Position at the National Office*



USDA Rural Development's Wisconsin State Office will be bidding farewell to Mark Brodziski, Business and Community Program Director, at the end of the month.

Brodziski, who recently accepted the position of Director of Specialty Lending Programs at the USDA Rural Development National Office in Washington, D.C., has been with USDA Rural Development in Wis. for the last 13 years. His knowledge and expertise will be an asset in the National Office, assisting projects all across the Nation.

Although Wisconsin will miss him greatly, we wish Brodziski much success in his new capacity with the agency.

Congratulations!

## ONLINE TOOLS



Notices of Funding Availability



Properties For Sale



Online Forms

[www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi)