



## Helping Our Rural Communities Grow

As America recovers from the recession, President Obama and Secretary Vilsack understand that folks in our small towns and rural communities are helping lead the way.

But the fact is, people in rural America also face a number of unique challenges. Many still don't have access to modern broadband internet, and in too many cases our rural towns rely on aging infrastructure to provide vital utilities.

The Obama Administration believes in giving all Americans a fair shot, including those in rural America, where our values as a nation are rooted.

On our watch, USDA Rural Development has made record investments that strengthen the rural economy, strengthen rural communities, and maximize opportunity for folks who call rural America home.

For example, since 2009, USDA Rural Development has invested in new and improved broadband service for nearly seven million rural Americans and more than 360,000 rural businesses. When these broadband projects are announced, they spur businesses to invest in communities and help drive job growth. They also create additional jobs as they are being built, and even more jobs when the networks become operational and are available to rural communities and businesses.

Over the past three and a half years, USDA Rural Development also contributed to the overall revitalization of rural American infrastructure. The Obama Administration invested in more than 6,250 community facilities – such as libraries, clinics, police and fire stations – that serve nearly 29 million rural Americans.

Through distance learning and telemedicine programs in more than 5,700 schools and medical facilities, the Administration has improved the availability of health care and educational opportunity for rural families.

Under President Obama, USDA Rural Development has helped modernize rural electric systems for more than 25 million Americans with funding for more than 90,000 miles of new or upgraded electric line. And we've invested in more than 5,500 water and waste water treatment projects, to help safeguard the health of 20 million rural residents.

These investments are impacting folks right here in Indiana. For example, as the Midwest continues to suffer during the extreme drought conditions and record breaking temperatures, the residents of Oakland City find relief just knowing improvements to their almost 100 year-old water collection system, a new water treatment plant, a new 400,000 gallon water tower, dredging the “Old Lake” which provides part of their water supply and repairs to the dam have significantly eliminated health and safety issues with the old water system. They now have an adequate supply, storage, transmission, treatment and distribution of potable water to the residents of Oakland City. The project also hopes to bring water loss down significantly, thus saving the community money.

With the help of USDA Rural Development’s Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program, a loan of \$2,045,000 and a grant of \$4,721,000 funded the community’s project.

Additionally, USDA Rural Development Community Facility funds are being used to expand and renovate the vacant Hangar 200, which is located on the former Grissom Air Force Base in Miami County.

This project, which hopes to provide 200 new jobs, offers a tremendous boost to North Central Indiana by helping to diversify the regional economy, as well as providing the opportunity to make use of the state’s longest runway of 12,500 ft. at Grissom. The \$13.8 million project will expand the hangar on the east and west sides by approximately 50,000 sq ft. total to accommodate wide body aircraft.

These stories are playing out across the country – so while we all recognize America is in a time that requires fiscal belt-tightening, we also know that smart, targeted investments are needed to give rural businesses and communities a competitive advantage in the global market.

President Obama and Secretary Vilsack know how important rural America is to our strength as a nation. And through these important investments, USDA Rural Development is committed to ensuring that hard-working folks in our small towns, those who are creating so much for our country, don’t get left behind.

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