



Committed to the future of rural communities.

# Almost Heaven WV Mountain State Rural Express



“Wild, Wonderful &  
Open For Business”

April, 2009

## Message From WV Acting State Director

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act — seems to be the buzz words right now with USDA Rural Development. We are confident the additional funding this brings to West Virginia will indeed be an economic stimulus to our State.

Our employees are working diligently at processing applications. We encourage all individuals and entities to take advantage of the funding opportunities provided by the Act.

We welcome the opportunity to serve you, the public.

One way to remember Rural Development as your lender is to think of us as your HUB.

**H-Housing Programs**

**U-Utilities (& Community) Programs**

**B-Business (& Cooperative) Programs**

Hub is defined as the thing that is of greatest importance to an activity or interest. Why not make Rural Development the **HUB** of financing your dreams?

Please take the time to see what programs we have to offer by visiting our website at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/wv](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wv). Feel free to contact any of our offices to find out if you qualify for financial assistance in your and/or your community's endeavors.

—Dianne Goff Cryler

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## USDA CELEBRATES EARTH DAY

April 21, 2009—Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack marked the 39th anniversary of Earth Day today by announcing 56 communities in 34 states have been selected to receive \$144.3 million in loans and grants for infrastructure improvements to improve water availability and quality.

Earth Day is observed annually on April 22 to raise awareness about the role citizens, businesses and communities can play in protecting the environment.

In West Virginia, Huttonsville Public Service District, Randolph County, WV, was awarded a

\$1,050,000 loan and a \$850,000 grant. These funds, partnered with other funding, will help replace the existing collection systems in the communities of Dailey, East Dailey and Valley Bend. A significant inflow and infiltration problem exists in these areas. Approximately 460 customers will benefit from the proposed project.

## Vilsack Announces Energy Audit Applications Being Accepted

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announces that USDA Rural Development is accepting funding applications from eligible entities for grants to conduct energy audits under the Rural Energy for America Program.

“For the first time ever, USDA will make grant funding available this year through the Rural Energy for America Program to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses obtain audits to



identify ways to improve energy efficiency,” Vilsack said. “The assistance provided by this program is in keeping with President Obama’s energy conservation goals for our nation.” The program is authorized in Section 9007 of the 2008 Farm Bill.

The audits are intended to help rural small businesses and agricultural producers determine where to make changes in their operations to enable them to reduce energy consumption. Audits are required for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects funded through REAP that exceed \$50,000.

States, tribal and local governments, land grant colleges or universities, other institutions of

higher learning, and electric cooperatives and public power entities are eligible to receive funds to conduct the audits. Parties seeking audits from the grantees must pay 25 percent of audit costs.

Applications for grants must be completed and submitted on paper or electronically no later than June 9. For further details about eligibility rules and application procedures, see the March 11, 2009, *Federal Register* at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/>.

USDA Rural Development intends to publish and seek public comment on a proposed regulation for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) later this year.

**USDA Rural Development's Mission:**  
To Increase Economic Opportunity and Improve The Quality of Life for All Rural Americans.

**USDA Rural Development's Vision:**  
A Rural America That Is A Healthy, Safe & Prosperous Place To Live and Work.

## Marine Veteran Obtains Home Ownership Due to Exemplary Rural Development Service

A Marine veteran from Iraq contacted Helen Lewis (*pictured to the right*), USDA Rural Development Area Technician in the Cross Lanes, West Virginia, office expressing the need for finding a home and a loan to allow him to finance the purchase.

On January 22, 2009, at 7:15 a.m., Helen Lewis assisted Ryan Robinson in completing an application for the purchase of a house.

Mr. Robinson had just recently started a new job and Helen did not want to hurt his work history with his employer so she arranged

a time for him to come in without missing work.

At the time, he did not have a house selected to purchase, so he was informed of the realtors located upstairs of the USDA Rural Development office. Within no time, the realtors were able to find him a home.

On February 27, at 7:15 a.m., Mr. Robinson came to the office for the loan writing conference. Once again, the staff accommodated Mr. Robinson to allow him to get to work without taking time off.

He told the Rural Development folks that he made it to work on time and even had enough time to stop at Tudor's Biscuit World on the way to work.

The loan was scheduled for closing for the first appointment in the morning in order to accommodate his work schedule.

The end results—an Iraq veteran has obtained home ownership that is decent, safe, sanitary and affordable. He was able to complete

this with only minimal time away from work. This is an



excellent example of outstanding service by federal employees. The agency was able to complete the entire process in eight weeks, which is comparable to industry standard with the private sector.

## Rural Energy For America Program (REAP) Workshops Held

Informational and instructional workshops have been held in conjunction with the WV Poultry Association and WVU Cooperative Extension Service in preparation for the soon to be announced Notice of Funds Availability for the Section 9007, Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).

Two sessions have been held, January 27-28 and again March 24-25, targeting the poultry growers in eastern West Virginia, although the program is open to all agricultural producers and small businesses in rural West Virginia.

Both sessions, attended by over thirty (30) potential applicants, outlined the eligibility criteria for the program and the application process that will be in place once the notice is published.



It is anticipated that over \$60 million will be available nationwide for this round of funding. Rural small businesses and agricultural producers who wish to install a renewable energy system or wish to improve the efficiency of their current facilities need to begin the process as soon as possible to take advantage of the 25% grant funds that will be available.

*Pictured to the left (l to r): Rural Development Civil Engineer Harry Taylor and Business & Cooperative Specialist Richard Satterfield work with a potential applicant.*

Energy efficiency projects will require an audit of the facilities to insure the use of funds will result in a savings of energy by the producer/small business. The cost of this audit may be offset through a new cost share in the EQIP program from Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Additional information can be obtained on the world wide web at: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/farmbill](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/farmbill) or by calling Richard Satterfield at (304) 284-4874.

## FY 2009 Community Connect Grant Program Announced

Acting State Director Dianne Goff Chrysler announced that USDA Rural Development has opened its Community Connect Grant Program application window for Fiscal Year 2009, where there is \$13,406,000 available for grants.

The minimum grant amount is \$50,000 and the maximum grant amount is \$1,000,000 for Fiscal Year 2009.

Paper applications must carry proof of shipping no later than June 19, 2009, and electronic

applications must be received by June 19, 2009. Late applications are not eligible for Fiscal Year 2009 grant funding.

You can obtain application guides and materials for the Community Connect Grant Program via the following web site: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/commconnect.htm> or by contacting Kenneth Kuchno at (202) 690-4673.

The purpose of the Community Connect Grant Program is to

provide financial assistance in the form of grants to establish applicants that will provide currently underserved areas, on a "community-oriented connectivity" basis, with broadband transmission service that fosters economic growth and delivers enhanced educational, health care, and public safety services.

Eligible applicants include: an incorporated organization; an Indian tribe or tribal organization as defined in 25 U.S.C. 450b (b) and (c); a state or local unit of

government; or a cooperative, private corporation or limited liability company organized on a for-profit or not-for-profit basis. Individuals are NOT eligible for Community Connect Grant Program financial assistance directly.

Further information can be found in *The Federal Register* at: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-9006.htm>.





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**We're on the Web!**

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