



MEDIA ADVISORY

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

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Rural Development Celebrates National Homeownership Month

Morgantown, WV – June 14, 2010:

- What:** National Homeownership Month Event
- When:** Thursday, June 24, 2010
11:00 AM
- Where:** Northview Drive
Highland Meadows
Elkins, Randolph County, WV
- Who:** HomeOwnership Center, Inc.
Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises (FAHE)
Highland Community Builders
USDA Rural Development

President Obama has proclaimed June as National Homeownership Month. Owning a home gives families security and a sense of pride, and it is an important part of the American way of life.

Rural Development has helped millions of rural individuals and families purchase a home of their own and realize their dreams. As we celebrate National Homeownership Month, we would like to highlight the key role that USDA Rural Development has played in providing homeownership opportunities to rural residents.

Officials at USDA approved a special set-aside of \$25 Million in mortgage funds for low and moderate-income homebuyers in Central Appalachia through JustChoice Lending, a regional non-profit financial intermediary backed by the Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises (FAHE). Loans originated through this pilot program feature payment assistance and interest rates as low as 1% to ensure affordable payments. The Demonstration is the first partnership of its kind nationwide, wherein non-profit lenders are being given unprecedented access to fast-track the deployment of federal funds. Locally, the HomeOwnership Center of Elkins is connecting homebuyers with this financing program.

In May, 2010, the first West Virginia homebuyer to benefit from this program closed on her home. The home purchased was built by Highland Community Builders and is located in Highland Meadows, a new neighborhood located in Elkins, Randolph County, WV. On Thursday, June 24, 2010, beginning at 11 AM, the new homeowner will celebrate this joyous occasion with Federal, State and local government officials, stakeholders and members of the surrounding community. The celebration will be held in the Highland Meadows neighborhood in Elkins, WV.

Committed to the future of rural communities.

"USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender."

To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

USDA Rural Development has several housing programs available to rural residents including the Section 502 Single Family Housing Ownership Direct Loan Program, the Section 502 Single Family Housing Ownership Guaranteed Loan Program, the Section 504 Single Family Housing Ownership Direct Repair Loans and Grants Program, the Section 523 Self-Help program, the Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Direct Loans and Section 538 Loan Guarantees Programs, the Section 533 Housing Preservation Grants Program and the Section 514/516 Farm Labor Housing Program.

Rural Development serves as the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers program assistance through its rural housing programs, rural business programs, and rural utilities programs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Further information on USDA Rural Development may be obtained by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>. In West Virginia, call 1-800-295-8228 to be put in touch with the appropriate personnel serving your county. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202.720.2600 (voice and TDD).

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