



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

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USDA Rural Development Celebrates Homeownership Month

Ripley, WV – June 28, 2011: Donna DeHart sports a mile-wide smile as she talks about her new home near Ripley. Ms. DeHart qualified for loan funds through USDA Rural Development's rural housing programs late last year. After searching for several months, she recently found the perfect home for her and her teenage daughter.

Ms. DeHart, who serves as the Director of Development for Habitat for Humanity of West Virginia, makes her career helping people realize the dream of homeownership. After owning her own home in Florida, she returned to West Virginia five years ago and had been renting. Most recently, she had been leasing a home with the intent to purchase it. After encountering some difficulty with traditional bank financing, Ms. DeHart was referred to USDA Rural Development by a friend. She began working with Brenda Fisher, Area Specialist for USDA Rural Development located in the USDA Service Center in Ripley. Ms. Fisher said, "We were able to qualify her for funding just before Christmas and the hunt for a home began. There are many people who contribute to the home buying process from the seller, buyer, inspector, realtor, appraiser, processors and closing agents. Our staff worked hard and everything fell into place once Donna found the house she wanted."

After a lengthy search, Ms. DeHart found out about a house that recently went on the market. She acted quickly and knew when she first visited the home that this house was "meant to be." Ms. DeHart went on to say, "We know this house is ours and we're responsible for it. The energy that we put into taking care of it will benefit us. The programs offered through USDA Rural Development are too good to be true. I want to help spread the word so that more people know about these programs."

USDA Rural Development West Virginia State Director Bobby Lewis said, "We are excited to be celebrating National Homeownership Month in June. For more than 60 years, USDA has worked to increase homeownership opportunities for rural Americans through our housing programs." Mr. Lewis went on to say, "Expanding and preserving homeownership is a major part of the foundation for a stronger, more prosperous rural America."

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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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