



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

1550 Earl Core Road, Suite 101 • Morgantown, WV 26505

Phone: 304.284.4860 OR 1.800.295.8228 • Fax: 304.284.4893 • TDD: 304.284.4836 • Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wv>

---

## USDA Rural Development Celebrates Homeownership Month

**Beckley, WV – June 30, 2011:** The Kennedy family is all smiles as they talk about their new home in Beckley. Johnny Jr. and Nicole qualified for loan funds through USDA Rural Development's rural housing programs in 2010. After searching for several months, they found the perfect home for their young family.

Johnny Kennedy Jr. and his wife Nicole, along with their young son had been living in a single-wide mobile home owned by a family member. After the birth of their daughter, they needed more room and wanted to buy a house of their own. After encountering some difficulty with traditional financing, the Kennedy's approached USDA Rural Development. They began working with Nancy Shoemaker-Dingess, Area Specialist for USDA Rural Development, located in the USDA Service Center in Beckley. Ms. Shoemaker-Dingess said, "The family worked hard to meet all of USDA's application criteria. We were able to qualify them for funding and the hunt for a home began. Everything fell into place once the Kennedy's found the house they wanted."

The Kennedy family purchased a home that had been in foreclosure. The family provided some equity to the loan and completed needed repairs to the house. The previous owner was renovating the home but a great deal of work remained undone. Mrs. Kennedy said, "As first-time homebuyers we had lots of questions but the staff at USDA Rural Development, especially Betty Triplett, helped guide us through the loan process and made it a pleasurable experience."

Since purchasing the home last summer and moving in, the Kennedy's have been hard at work. They have improved the house by enlarging and updating the kitchen and adding an eat-in breakfast room. They have cleared the backyard and added fencing giving their children a great play area.

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."

Rural Development serves as the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers program assistance through its housing, business, community and infrastructure 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).

##

---

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).