



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>

Gail Bennett, Public Affairs Specialist – (304) 284-4875

Contact:
Jay Fletcher: 202-690-0498

Agriculture Under Secretary Tonsager Announces Availability of Funds To Achieve Long-Term Economic Growth, Business Development and Sustainability in Rural Areas

WASHINGTON, April 5, 2010 – Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development Dallas Tonsager today announced that USDA is accepting applications for business and community development grants to help rural communities create wealth, attract more residents and become economically self-sustaining.

The funding is being provided through USDA Rural Development’s Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) program, which provides grants for technical assistance and planning activities to improve economic conditions in rural cities or towns of 50,000 people or fewer.

“As a longtime rural resident, I am optimistic about President Obama’s vision for a stronger, more prosperous rural America,” Tonsager said. “These grants can be the foundation for implementing the President’s vision of developing initiatives that emphasize expanding exports, linking farm production to local consumption, producing biofuels and renewable energy, capitalizing on broadband, and innovatively using natural resources as wealth-building tools for rural places.”

Funding under the RBOG program can be used to pay for economic planning, technical assistance, and training for rural communities, entrepreneurs or economic development officials. Under this round of funding, priority consideration will be given to applications that best demonstrate strong regional or multi-jurisdictional collaboration, referred to as ‘great regions’, leadership capacity, and those that represent varying demographics (including underserved and under-represented communities). The amount of funding available is \$2.48 million.

Applications are due June 28, 2010. More information on how to apply for a USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grant is available at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rbog.htm>. To be eligible for funding, an applicant must be a public body, non-profit corporation, Indian Tribe or cooperative with members that are primarily rural residents. Applicants must also have significant expertise in the activities proposed and the financial strength to ensure the objectives of the proposed grant can be accomplished.

USDA Rural Development administers and manages more than 40 housing, business, and community infrastructure and facility programs through a network of 6,100 employees located in 500 national, state and local offices. These programs are designed to improve the economic

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).

stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers, and improve the quality of life in rural America. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of more than \$132 billion in loans and loan guarantees.

#