



NEWS RELEASE

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AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK ANNOUNCES MORE THAN \$13 MILLION TO HELP MEET COUNTRY'S RENEWABLE ENERGY NEEDS *Southeast Tide Energy Project, Homer Wind, Mat-Su Projects Receive Grant Funds*

DECATUR, Ill., Sept. 2, 2009 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that the department is providing more than \$13 million in loans and grants for 233 renewable energy projects in 38 states including Alaska under the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Dallas Tonsager, Under Secretary for Rural Development, made the announcement on behalf of Vilsack during a speech at the Farm Progress Show.

"Under President Obama's leadership, USDA is working to increase the availability of renewable energy, which not only will reduce our dependence on foreign oil, but also strengthen our national economy," Vilsack said. "The funding announced today will help expand renewable energy in America, which is a key part of the nation's long-term strategy for continued economic prosperity and energy independence."

The loan guarantees and grants can be used for renewable energy systems, energy efficiency improvements, feasibility studies and energy audits. These funds are not part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. For more information on the REAP program, which is authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill, please visit www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/farmbill/index.html

Four Alaska applicants will receive grant funds.

Alaska Power & Telephone Company (AP&T) will receive a \$50,000 grant to assess whether it is feasible to harvest energy from tides in the Hoonah area in Southeast Alaska. Currently the area gets its energy from diesel generation. AP&T will provide 75 percent (\$150,000) of the funds needed for the study.

Two Homer businesses will receive grants for wind generation projects.

The Bear Creek Winery will install a wind turbine to provide electricity for the winery and for a companion bed and breakfast operation. Excess power generated by the turbine will be sold to Homer Electric Association (HEA).

Heavenly Ridge bed and breakfast will install a wind turbine that is expected to produce enough energy to power the business. Excess power will also be sold to HEA.

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In the Mat-Su Valley, The Alascon Precast energy efficiency project improves the owner's revenue stream by reducing energy usage. The project will improve the curing time for concrete septic tank molds, making the manufacturing process more efficient. Using REAP grant funds, Alascon Precast is expected to generate more revenue while saving energy.

Alaska projects and their funding levels include:

- Alascon Precast Shop, \$3,700 grant
- Heavenly Ridge, \$3,800 grant
- Bear Creek Winery, \$4,500 grant
- Alaska Power and Telephone Company, \$50,000 grant

Funding of each recipient is contingent upon the recipient meeting the conditions of the grant or loan agreement. A complete list of REAP awards is available at:
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/>.

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