



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT-ALASKA ANNOUNCES STAFFING CHANGES IN TWO WESTERN ALASKA OFFICES

PALMER, January 13, 2009-Acting Alaska State Director for USDA Rural Development Chad Padgett announced today that two Rural Development area offices in Western Alaska will undergo staffing changes designed to increase outreach services.

“Western Alaska is an important mission area for us,” said Padgett. “With that in mind I have asked long-time Fairbanks Rural Development Area Manager Jim Pohlman to establish regular office hours at our office in the Nome Federal Building and serve as acting area director there, a position he held until several years ago. I have also asked Rural Development Director of Special Projects Gene Kane to serve as acting area director of our Bethel office.” Kane will augment the efforts of loan technician Jovan Dull, who is permanently assigned to the Bethel office. Pohlman will provide staffing in Nome while Rural Development seeks to fill loan specialist and technician positions there. Pohlman will continue to head the Fairbanks Rural Development office and Kane will continue to serve as director of special projects for Rural Development.

Padgett said that the 2008 Farm Bill contains a number of provisions designed to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency and the staff changes are intended to make it easier for Alaskans who are eligible to meet with staff and apply for funding under those and other Rural Development programs. “We have a long and positive relationship with the local governments, Tribes and non-profit entities serving Western Alaska,” said Padgett. “These changes are intended to build on those relationships and form new, lasting ones.” Padgett said that residents of the Seward Peninsula, including Nome, who want to discuss Rural Development programs, should call Pohlman at 479-4362. The Bethel office number is 543-3858 and the State Office in Palmer can be reached at 761-7705.

USDA Rural Development’s mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Since 2001 Rural Development has invested an estimated \$1.2 billion in Alaska for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. In addition to the State Office in Palmer, USDA Rural Development maintains offices in Bethel, Dillingham, Fairbanks, Kenai, Nome and Sitka. Further information on rural programs is available at any USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ak>.

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