



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development

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Ben Higgins, State Director

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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT TO HOLD HOUSING REPAIR WORKSHOP

Funding available for non-profit organizations

DAVIS, Calif., January 16, 2007 – USDA Rural Development is offering a workshop for non-profit organizations interested in assisting Section 504 Housing Repair Loan and Grant applicants living in Merced County with their applications. USDA Rural Development provides funding to non-profit organizations that helps offset costs incurred while packaging loan and grant applications.

USDA Rural Development Section 504 loans and/or grants are available to assist low income homeowners in rural areas with repair of their home. Repairs may be made to improve or modernize the home, to make it safe, sanitary, or to remove health and safety hazards. These funds may be used for roofing, flooring, lighting, insulation, weatherization, installation or renovation of water and sewer systems, and more. Approximately 130 homes throughout rural California were repaired in 2006 using this program.

“The assistance provided by partner organizations is an essential component to the success of the Section 504 program,” said Ben Higgins, USDA Rural Development State Director. “Their help allows for homeowners living in rural communities with limited means to correct major health or safety hazards, or to make homes more accessible for people with disabilities.”

The housing workshop will be held Wednesday, January 31 at 10:00 a.m. in the UC Cooperative Extension classroom located at 2145 Wardrobe Avenue in Merced. For more information contact Jose Guardado or Guadalupe Valdes at USDA Rural Development in Merced at (209) 722-4119 ext. 4.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development has invested over \$76 billion since the beginning of the Bush Administration to provide equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. As a result, over 1.5 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at one of California's 25 local USDA Rural Development offices or by visiting <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ca>.

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“Committed to the future of rural communities”
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