



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS \$10,000 GRANT TO SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

*Funds will Help Organize Families to Work Together to Build Their Own Homes*

BURLINGTON – June 29 – USDA Rural Development has announced a \$10,000 grant to Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission to create a Self-Help Housing program in Des Moines, Henry, Lee and Louisa counties. Through this program homeowners invest sweat-equity to help control the costs associated with buying a house.

“Ensuring that Iowans living in rural communities and areas have decent, safe and affordable housing has been a top priority of USDA Rural Development for many years,” said Mark Reisinger, USDA Rural Development State Director in Iowa. “It is through housing programs such as this self-help program that we can ensure as many rural Iowans as possible have access to adequate housing.”

Self-Help Housing is a construction method by which participants, work together with other families, utilizing their own labor to reduce the total construction costs of their homes. Construction work is completed on homes by an exchange of labor with one another.

USDA Rural Development provided Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission (SEIRPC) with \$10,000 to assist with costs associated with hiring personnel to carry out a Self-Help Housing program, help pay administrative expenses, and even assist with the purchasing of essential equipment such as power tools for the families to use.

Along with financial assistance for SEIRPC, Rural Development offers low-interest housing loans to help individual families pay the construction costs associated with their new home. Individuals or families living in one of the communities served by SEIRPC and interested in learning more can contact Sara Hecox, Housing Administrator for SEIRPC, at 200 Front St., Suite 400 in Burlington or call (319) 753-5107 x211.

“Providing rural housing opportunities is just another way the federal government, through USDA Rural Development, is enhancing the ability of rural communities to develop and to grow, ensuring the best possible quality of life for rural residents,” Reisinger said.

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“USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.”  
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This announcement was made as part of Rural Development's celebration of June as National Homeownership Month, and was one of more than 20 activities Rural Development organized. Other events include housing fairs, housing workshops and lender trainings.

In addition to Self-Help Housing, Rural Development has both guaranteed and direct homeownership loans that are designed to give low-income families access to affordable, decent, safe and sanitary housing opportunities. In addition to helping with homeownership, loans and grants are available to help qualifying families and the elderly make needed house repairs so that they can remain in their own home.

Last year USDA Rural Development provided \$109 million in housing assistance to rural Iowans living in communities of less than 20,000 residents. Rural Development helped more than 1,250 Iowa families in becoming homeowners in 2005.

### **Contact USDA Rural Development**

Eleven USDA Rural Development offices in Iowa serve the 1.9 million Iowans living in rural communities. Office locations include a State Office in Des Moines, along with Area Offices in Albia, Atlantic, Humboldt, Indianola, Iowa Falls, Le Mars, Mount Pleasant, Storm Lake, Tipton and Waverly.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver quality 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 provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in home ownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure.

Further information on rural programs is available at the local USDA Rural Development office in Mount Pleasant, which can be reached at (319) 986-5800, or by visiting Rural Development's web site at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/ia](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ia).