



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lee Merrick Receives September Vilsack-Wallace Award

*Merrick Recognized for Outstanding Efforts Reviewing more than 400
Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) Applications*

DES MOINES, Iowa – September 4, 2009 – Bill Menner, USDA Rural Development State Director in Iowa, today announced that Lee Merrick has been selected to receive the September Vilsack-Wallace Award. Lee is being recognized for his outstanding efforts performing technical merit reviews on nearly all of the 423 Rural Energy for American Program (REAP) applications received in Iowa so far this year.

“The energy program would not have gone so smoothly without his expertise and willingness to complete the reviews in such an efficient manner,” Menner said. “Completion of the work was outside the scope of his job description as state environmental coordinator, and in addition to an already demanding position. Lee’s dedication and commitment to this huge volume of applications put Iowa in a position to lead the nation.”

Through the first two rounds of the program this year 212 producers and businesses in Iowa have received \$11.6 million in guaranteed loan and grant funds. More than 35 percent of the awardees have been from Iowa and they have received nearly 40 percent of the funds awarded nationwide.

The Vilsack-Wallace Award is given out each month to a USDA Rural Development employee in Iowa who goes above and beyond their normal work duties to assist rural Iowans.

The award is named for the two most recent Iowans to serve as U.S. Agriculture Secretary. Tom Vilsack served as Iowa’s governor from 1999 to 2007. Henry A. Wallace was first Ag Secretary and later Vice President under Frank Delano Roosevelt. He also perfected the first corn hybrid and founded Hi-Bred Corn, which later became Pioneer Hi-Bred.

USDA Rural Development is an equal opportunity lender with a variety of direct and guaranteed rural credit programs involving single and multi-family housing, community facilities, water and sewer development and business and cooperative programs.

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