



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 6, 2009

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City of Leoti Receives USDA Award

Topeka, KS - USDA Rural Development Business and Community Programs Director Gary Smith announced that the City of Leoti has been recognized as the Agency's 2009 Silver Faucet Award winner. The City was presented the award recently at the Kansas Rural Water Association's annual conference in Wichita, recognizing their outstanding efforts in providing their customers with a good, dependable water system.

"Like many rural Kansas communities, this community has had to face the challenges of a declining population due to out-migration. In an attempt to stem the tide of the outflow, the community embarked upon developing a comprehensive countywide strategic plan developed by citizens of the County. The plan addressed, in a comprehensive manner, the elements relating to economic opportunity and sustainable community development. One of the cornerstones of that plan was the upgrading of a badly aging community's water system," remarked Smith.

Each year USDA Rural Development presents the Silver Faucet Award to a water supply system in Kansas that exemplifies the qualities of cooperation, dedication and leadership in providing both high quality and quantity of water service to rural water users. The 2009 announcement marked the 35th year that USDA Rural Development has presented the award to a water system for exemplary actions and leadership.

A study of the water system was completed in 2000. The proposed \$2.0 million water system improvements project was funded by USDA Rural Development in 2001, with \$1.9 million in loan and grant funds. The improvements included replacing obsolete water distribution lines, improving existing wells, and other improvements to better serve the community well into the future. Water loss has remained very low following the completion of the project.

The community has attracted the attention of several businesses as they diligently work to improve the economic climate in this western Kansas community.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs that support increasing economic opportunities and enhancing the quality of life for rural Americans. As a venture capital entity, USDA Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure in rural America. For additional information regarding USDA Rural Development and its programs, log onto the Agency's website at www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks or call the USDA Rural Development state office at 785-271-2700.

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