



# NEWS RELEASE

1303 SW First American Place, Suite 100, Topeka, KS 66604-4040  
Voice (785) 271-2701, FAX (785) 271-2708, WEB [www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – August 5, 2009

Contact - Harold Alford (785) 271-2701

## **DEPUTY AGRICULTURE SECRETARY MERRIGAN ANNOUNCES \$6.25 MILLION AVAILABLE IN RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS**

### ***Individual Grant Awards Range from \$50,000 to \$300,000***

Deputy Agriculture Secretary Kathleen Merrigan announced that USDA is accepting applications for more than \$6.25 million in competitive grants under the Rural Community Development Initiative program administered by USDA Rural Development. These funds underscore the importance the Obama Administration places on helping rural business to develop the capacity to address critical housing, community and economic development needs.

“The funding announced today will improve the ability of local organizations to deliver enhanced services in housing, community facilities and economic development and strengthen America’s small cities and towns,” said Merrigan. “These grants will increase economic opportunity and the quality of life in rural areas as the Obama Administration continues working to rebuild and revitalize rural America.”

To be eligible for the Rural Community Development Initiative, applicants must provide matching funds equal to the grant they receive. This leveraging requirement increases the impact of the funding received from USDA. Grant awards are contingent upon the recipient meeting the conditions of the grant award. Eligible applicants include public or private (including tribal) organizations at least three years in existence that have experience working with eligible recipients. Recipients can be private non-profit organizations, community-based housing and development organizations, low-income rural communities, or federally recognized tribes.

An example of a project previously funded in Kansas under the Rural Community Development Initiative program includes the “Developing Community Coaches” program. The Kansas State University Center for Engagement and Community Development (CEDC) manages the program which will establish and conduct community development academies across the State. The program delivers a series of professional train-the trainer opportunities that will allow KSU Research and Extension Professions to gain information and skills in community strategic planning facilities and community coaching. The coaches will work in concert with rural communities in targeted counties to help them address the challenges of change and sustainable community development.

Gary Smith, Director, Business and Community Programs commented, “This is a program predicated on a train-the-trainer concept where rural communities and businesses can get help to achieve their vision of improved economic prosperity.”

For more information, please see the June 26, 2009 *Federal Register*, page 30510. The deadline to apply for funding is Sept. 24, 2009. Applicants may also visit [www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/rcdi/index.htm](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/rcdi/index.htm) to obtain an application and program guidelines. Application information for electronic submissions can be found at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Paper application packages are available from any USDA Rural Development state office. Please visit [www.rurdev.gov](http://www.rurdev.gov) for a listing of state offices.

USDA Rural Development’s mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development fosters growth in homeownership, finances

business development, and supports the creation of critical community and technology infrastructure

For additional information regarding USDA Rural Development and its programs, log onto the Agency's website at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks) or call the Agency's state office at 785-271-2700.

#