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WINCHENDON RECEIVES GRANT FROM PRESIDENTS' FARM BILL

Winchendon, MA – In what was expected be the announcement of a \$601,400 Farm Bill grant, USDA Rural Development State Director, David Tuttle surprised town officials today when he arrived at the Winchendon Town Hall on behalf of President George W. Bush and Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman with a second big check for an additional \$363,300 grant. Mr. Tuttle announced that not only has Winchendon been awarded a federal grant that comes from a provision within the 2002 Farm Bill totaling \$601,400, but it will also receive a subsequent grant of \$363,300. Joining Mr. Tuttle in presenting the funds to Town Manager James Kreidler were State Senator Stephen Brewer, Representative Brian Knuuttila and Tricia Paulsen, a representative from Congressman John Olver's office.

The \$601,400 grant is available to the town thanks to the 2002 Farm Bill and will be used toward Winchendon's sewer collection and transport system upgrade. The Farm Bill, which was signed into law by President Bush on May 13, 2002, provided Rural Development with \$360 million nationally to fund water and wastewater projects. The Rural Development Water and Waste Disposal provision in the Farm Bill helps to make available the necessary resources to establish water and waste disposal facilities that are compliant with federal and state environmental standards. The additional grant of \$363,000, which comes from Rural Development's fiscal year 2002 budget, will be used to complete improvements being made to Winchendon's wastewater treatment facility.

"It's one thing to recognize that a problem exists, and in this case the problem was the outdated wastewater treatment plant in Winchendon. It is entirely another thing to come to grips with how to fix it," said Town Manager, James Kreidler. "I can honestly say that we would still be searching for the answers if not for the USDA Rural Development grant funds that are being committed to this project. The good people of Winchendon owe a debt of gratitude to State Director David Tuttle and State Senator Stephen Brewer. As a direct result of their hard work and commitment we will be better able to address our wastewater needs and in the process the Miller's River will be better protected and preserved for this and future generations to come."

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The \$604,400 Farm Bill grant and the subsequent \$363,300 grant come on the heels of another USDA Rural Development grant that totaled \$550,000 and was awarded to Winchendon in March of this year. The total sewer system and water treatment facility improvement project is expected to cost \$15.5 million with a majority of the funding provided through a loan with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

“Well constructed and maintained water and wastewater facilities are crucial factors in maintaining healthy communities,” said State Director Tuttle. “This project is a perfect example of what is possible when local, state and federal forces combine.” Mr. Tuttle also announced funding for projects in the Towns of Warren and Barre today.

“This much-needed funding will allow the town of Winchendon to move forward with the upgrade of its public sewer system,” said Senator Brewer. “I commend the town and its local officials who worked tirelessly to compile a thorough, competitive application that would secure this funding.”

Massachusetts State Representative Brian Knuuttila said, “I agree 100% with the comments of Winchendon’s Town Manger James Kreidler. Realizing that there is a problem and that something needs to be done is really the easy half of any proposed solution. Actually coming through and doing something concrete to resolve the problem is truly the hard part of any solution. Kudos to the Town of Winchendon officials, Congressman Olver, Senator Brewer and Rural Development State Director David Tuttle for getting the job done!”

More information on the 2002 Farm Bill and its provisions are available at: <http://www.usda.gov/farbill>

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