



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**June 26, 2002**

**CONTACT: MARIL E. ALSUP**  
**Public Information Coordinator**  
**(413) 253-4314 or [maril.alsup@ma.usda.gov](mailto:maril.alsup@ma.usda.gov)**

## **BLANDFORD RECEIVES OVER \$2 MILLION FOR PHASE ONE OF NEW WATER SYSTEM**

**BLANDFORD, MA** – It is hard to imagine that damage to water lines in Massachusetts could possibly be caused by earthquakes but such is, at least partially, the case in Blandford. After experiencing two small earthquakes in the summer of 2000 and subsequent mounting problems with the water system, it became apparent to Town officials and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection that the Blandford water system could use some updating.

Knowing that the reconstruction of a new water distribution and filtration system could be quite costly, Blandford sought the help of USDA Rural Development. Rural Development, a mission area within the U.S. Department of Agriculture provides loans, grants and technical assistance for the renovation or construction of public water and waste systems in rural communities. The federal agency agreed to assist the Town and today Rural Development's State Director, David Tuttle announced that they will provide three phases of funding for the construction of the new system. The first phase of funding will total over \$2 million and will be distributed to the Town in the form of a \$1,183,803 low interest loan and a \$968,565 grant.

The Town of Blandford's water distribution system was, for the most part, constructed in the 1950's yet some portions of the system were put into place as far back as the 1900's. The existing water mains consist mainly of asbestos cement (AC) pipes and unlined cast iron pipes which although, at the time of construction were both considered state-of-the-art, are now known to be undesirable and even hazardous. With financial backing from Rural Development, Blandford will be able to replace the outdated system and construct a water filtration plant that complies with the Safe Drinking Water Act.

###