



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**CONGRESSWOMAN NANCY JOHNSON DELIVERS USDA FUNDS TO TORRINGTON
AREA HEALTH DISTRICT**

TORRINGTON, CT – On behalf of President George W. Bush and Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, Congresswoman Nancy Johnson and USDA Rural Development State Director, David Tuttle arrived at the Torrington Area Health District today with a check for \$202,100. The funding is being provided to the Torrington Area Health District and its Chairman of the Board of Directors, Gene Perlotto by the USDA Rural Development's Rural Housing Service (RHS) in an effort to assist the health district in expanding its valuable services and office space.

The Torrington Area Health District (TAHD) was originally organized in order to enforce state regulations dealing with septic systems, wells, food inspections, and other environmental health mandates. Today, the health district is a wide-ranging agency addressing traditional public health responsibilities such as immunizations; food protection and Women, Infants & Children (WIC) programs and services. It is also home to the Northwest Connecticut Area Health Education Center (AHEC). Additionally, the Torrington Area Health District collaborates with many federal, state and local organizations on new, emerging health issues.

Since its inception in 1967, the Torrington Area Health District has grown from its original coverage of seven area communities (Borough of Bantam, Borough of Litchfield, Litchfield, Goshen, Harwinton, Morris and Torrington) and approximately 45,000 rural residents, to servicing its current eighteen communities (which include, Bethlehem, Thomaston, Cornwall, Warren, Winsted, Kent, Salisbury, Norfolk, Watertown, Plymouth and Canaan) and roughly 120,000 customers. Unfortunately, the space that the health district occupies on Main Street in Torrington has not grown as quickly as their services and coverage have. For that reason, TAHD sought the assistance of USDA Rural Development which agreed to provide the health district with the necessary financial resources to expand its office space.

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The Torrington Area Health District expansion efforts will include the purchase, rehabilitation and renovation of an 11,000 square foot office building that is adjacent to their current home on Main Street.

“TAHD is very excited and grateful to receive this loan from Rural Development,” said Jim Rokos, Director of Health for TAHD. “This money will directly benefit the TAHD and all of its 121,050 residents. The Board of Health and all the thirty-seven employees of the Torrington Area Health District want to thank Congresswoman Nancy Johnson and USDA Rural Development State Director, David Tuttle, very much for all their help with this endeavor.”

“The Torrington Area Health District and USDA Rural Development share a common goal – to provide improved access to quality health care for the residents of rural Northwestern Connecticut,” said State Director David Tuttle. “This expansion effort makes it possible to increase TAHD’s services and facilities and speaks to our commitment to help build stronger, more vibrant rural communities.”

USDA Rural Development Community Facilities program provides low-interest loans, grants and loan guarantees in order to construct, enlarge, extend or otherwise improve community facilities that provide essential services in rural areas.

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