



RURAL DEVELOPMENT MISSOURI

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BUILDING COMMUNITIES

.....CONNECTING THE ASSETS

Rural Development managers recently attended the first combined Rural Development Training Conference under the direction of Under Secretary Tom Dorr. The focus of the meeting was to reconnect our assets: our people, our programs, and our commitment, to build a stronger organization and to be better prepared to meet the challenges of a changing rural America.

This conference was the beginning of a new Era for Rural Development - a new vision and mission.

Vision: To provide reasonable and cost effective venture capital and technical assistance for rural America

Mission:

- Increase Economic Opportunity in Rural America
- Improve the Quality of Life in Rural America
- Be Responsive to Customers' Needs

Rural Development leaders heard about trends in Rural America, approaches to rural development in the 21st century and how we can prepare for the realities in funding, and the role of Rural Development in connecting the assets.

Under Secretary Dorr said it best: "No other government organization can compare when it comes to serving Rural America. We have the people, the programs and the vision it takes to made a difference.....'to grow a town from the ground up'.

Greg Branum, Missouri State Director brought it all home. "Missouri Rural Development employees are up to the challenge and are dedicated to continued excellence in providing assistance to rural Missouri!



On the left, Greg Branum, Missouri State Director, and on the right Under Secretary Tom Dorr.

FISCAL YEAR 2003 FUNDING

The end of our fiscal year is fast approaching, and we have been utilizing our state allocations. Several National Office poolings have occurred, and some are coming up in the very near future.

These poolings provide Missouri access to unused funds from other states.

Missouri traditionally obligates considerably more dollars than originally allocated. Even though it is the end of the fiscal year, it is still important to get applications filed and in line for funding. **The bottom line is if you never get an application filed then it is certain it will never be funded. And, if you wait to file your application when RD has plenty of money, applications submitted before yours will be funded first.**

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITIES (NOFA)

Applications are being taken for:

✓ **RURAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS:** This program provides funds to help nonprofit, community-based development organizations, federally recognized Indian tribes and low-income communities improve their ability to develop rural housing and community facilities and to improve economic growth. *Recipients are required to obtain matching funds.* Funding of selected applicants will be contingent upon meeting the conditions of the grant agreement.

Grant recipients will provide training and technical assistance to eligible nonprofit community-development organizations and low-income communities located in rural areas with populations of 50,000 or less. Technical assistance includes: setting up homeownership education programs; supporting micro-enterprises, cooperatives and sustainable development; and providing training to develop strategic plans, hire staff and oversee board operations and management.

✓ **PUBLIC TELEVISION STATION DIGITAL TRANSITION GRANTS:** This program is available to finance the conversion of television services to digital broadcasting for small public television stations. The Federal Communications Commission mandated that conversion to digital broadcasting be completed by May 1, 2003, but many small rural public television stations did not meet the deadline. The application deadline is September 16. Grants will be limited to a maximum of \$2 million for an individual station, or if it is an application representing a group of stations, the first will be limited to \$2 million and the other to \$1 million each.

Copies of the NOFA's may be obtained at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/nofas/index.html>.

FORWARD THIS NEWSLETTER TO A FRIEND WHO "NEEDS TO KNOW"!

RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO COMMUNITIES HIT BY TORNADOS

Earlier this year tornados struck several counties and communities in rural Missouri. The loss of infrastructure, essential facilities and housing was devastating and created a tremendous financial burden for those located in their path.

Rural Development, along with many of our partners and legislators, continue to provide funds and support to these areas.

Carl Junction received extensive damage to their infrastructure and public facilities. This small community will receive funds from our Community Facility Economic Initiative Grant program for a planning grant to guide its leaders in rebuilding their community.

Pierce City was basically flattened by the tornado. Many homes were destroyed or severely damaged. Multi-Family housing complexes close to damaged areas provide temporary housing while homes are being rebuilt or repaired. Low interest loans and grant programs have helped repair homes in this community and many others across the state. Funds will also be provided for planning services to determine the most economical way for the community to begin rebuilding.

President Bush visited Pierce City in the aftermath of the destruction. The President visited with victims of the tornado as well as members of the local Rural Development office.



Pictured with President Bush is Pam Volkl, Community Development Technician in the Carthage local office.

Rural Development programs have an excellent track record of building opportunities for home ownership and building stronger communities. Rebuilding will take time. If individuals or communities need help, contact any one of our field offices. Contact information is available in your local telephone directory or at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/whoware.htm>.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT SALEM, MISSOURI



Salem and Dent County are in south central Missouri in the heart of the Ozarks, twenty minutes from the Ozark National Scenic Riverways National Park. Large mining and milling operations have been located near Salem for many years. Recently, this booming industry has declined, leaving a gap in quality employment opportunities. Other major industries are wood related (stave bolts, charcoal, and flooring) and food product distribution. Cut and sew plants, once plentiful in the area are almost extinct.

Tourists come to the area to float the rivers, fish and hunt and enjoy the beautiful scenery. However, the community has recognized the need and opportunity to develop the tourism industry and increase visitors to the area. Increasing incomes and enhancing job skills are priority issues. Only thirty-six percent of the population has a high school education.

So, what are they doing that's so special? First, they applied for but did not receive, designation as a Federal Empowerment Zone, nor did they receive designation as an Enterprise Community, either of which would have provided grant funds to leverage with other sources to improve economic opportunity.

However, they still had one major benefit in applying for these designations – a 10 year strategic plan. This plan outlined a plan of work to meet high priority issues identified by local citizens. Community leaders and residents have worked cooperatively to address these issues. They have some foundations for their success: involving stakeholders in the community in all processes, building a powerful and extensive partnership base, and leveraging community resources with other funds to help meet community needs. Let's look at examples.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

- ★ Salem Area Community Betterment Association
- ★ Telecommunications Community Resource Center
- ★ The Dent County Industrial Development Board and City of Salem Economic Development work cooperatively to attract business and industry.
- ★ Healthy Communities, a 501(c)3 non-for profit organization
- ★ Training programs on 'Creating Your Website' and 'Marketing on the Internet'
- ★ The Commons, a 501(c)3 not-for profit recruited support for 70 acre expo and common area.

PARTNERSHIPS:

- ★ The City of Salem, Salem Area Community Betterment (SCABA); Chamber of Commerce, Dent County Industrial Development Board, and City Economic Development work together forming viable partnerships.
- ★ Salem R-80 School, City of Salem, US Food Service, Bank of Salem, Town and Country Bank and the University of Missouri all partnered to establish the telecommunications center
- ★ Southwest Baptist University, local organizations and individuals joined resources to build a new \$1.7 million satellite campus in Salem.

LEVERAGING OF FUNDS:

- ★ USDA Rural Development Community Facility funds which included a teacher's closet and a visitor center
- ★ USDA Rural Development Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) for tourism development and funding for infrastructure (roads)
- ★ State of Missouri Community Development Block Grant for sewer systems, and economic infrastructure
- ★ Missouri Department of Transportation, (MODOT) grant to develop a hiking and biking trail.

For more detailed information about Salem please visit: <http://www.ezec.gov/communit/salemcc.html>.

Greg Branum, State Director, stated that "Rural Development is proud of the leaders and residents of the community of Salem. They serve as an example of what can be done, and a tribute to those members of the community who have made it happen."

Come visit Missouri Rural Development
on the World Wide Web at:

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo/index.html>