

# NEWS RELEASE



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United States Department of Agriculture  
Rural Development

## **USDA CELEBRATES EARTH DAY WITH OVER \$100 MILLION IN COMMUNITY WATER/WASTEWATER LOANS AND GRANTS**

In recognition of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day, Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced the selection of 42 rural water and wastewater community infrastructure projects in 29 states to receive investment funding totaling over \$104 million. The funding will assist rural communities address health and environmental issues and promote business development. This year's Earth Day theme, "Action for a Healthy Environment" encourages Americans to heed President Bush's call to be good stewards of the land and life around us.

"Today's investments will help protect our environment and improve the quality of life for many rural residents throughout rural America," said Tom Dorr, Under Secretary for Rural Development. "President Bush has proclaimed 2003 as the ["Year Of Clean Water."](#) The President's proclamation recognizes the importance of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Clean Water Act and calls upon all Americans to serve by setting good examples of environmental stewardship in our daily lives."

Gregory C. Branum, Missouri State Director for USDA Rural Development, said, "I am pleased that two Missouri communities are benefiting from this program including the City of Amazonia, in northwest Missouri and New Madrid County Public Water Supply District (PWSD) #5, in southeast Missouri. The City of Amazonia will assist 130 households with a \$329,500 Loan and a \$371,500 Grant for a new central sewer system. New Madrid County PWSD #5 will construct a second well, a third standpipe and expand distribution lines with their \$1,827,700 Loan and \$1,218,500 Grant to add 300 additional users plus improved water service to a total of 990 households." Branum added that a special tribute goes to Bob Ray, Board Chairman for New Madrid County PWSD #5, for his 17 years of dedicated service to help provide good quality water to rural residents.

Nationwide funding for the projects is comprised of \$36.3 million in loans and \$67.8 in grants that will build and improve rural water and sewage systems enabling rural communities to benefit through cleaner water, recreation and wildlife resources. Included in the funding are Technical Assistance and Training (TAT) Grants and Solid Waste Management Grants. TAT grants go to nonprofit organizations to provide technical assistance and training to associations on a wide range of issues relating to the delivery of water and waste disposal services. Solid Waste Management grants are made to public and private nonprofit organizations for providing technical assistance and training to associations to reduce or eliminate pollution of water resources and improve planning and management of solid waste facilities.

A complete list of the selected loan and grant recipients and projects can be found at:

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/newsroom/news.htm>

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. Rural Development is Rural America's Venture Capitalist providing equity, liquidity, and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on these and other rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at

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