



NEWS RELEASE

FAIR HOUSING MONTH

USDA - Rural Development

During April 2003 America will celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act prohibiting the discrimination in financing, renting, or selling of any dwelling. Since that milestone in civil rights history, we have witnessed tremendous growth in home ownership throughout the United States. As we celebrate this milestone, we must also reaffirm our commitment to fair access to housing for all Americans.

Along with eliminating housing discrimination it is important that we commit resources to help more minority families realize their dream of homeownership. Homeownership is freedom, it is a catalyst for pride and self esteem, it helps to stabilize local neighborhoods and brings economic security to families.

To support minority homeownership, President George Bush has challenged Federal, state, and local governments, along with other public and private organizations to reach the goal of increasing minority homeowners by 5.5 million by 2010. Achieving this goal will not only strengthen our communities but our national economy as well.

To assist in reaching the President's goal, USDA Rural Development unveiled a Five-Star Commitment to expand rural minority homeownership by (1) lowering fees to reduce barriers to minority homeownership, (2) doubling the number of self-help housing participants by 2010, (3) increasing participation by minority lenders, (4) promoting credit counseling and homeownership education, and (5) monitoring lending activities to ensure a 10 percent increase in minority homeownership.

USDA Rural Development serves as the lead federal entity for rural development assistance. Further information on the housing program or any other programs can be obtained by visiting the Missouri Homepage <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo/> or by contacting any of our [area](#) and [local](#) offices.



USDA Rural Development is an Equal Opportunity Lender, Provider, and Employer. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410