

USDA Rural Development Montana Fiscal Year 2002 Annual Report



"Improving the Quality of Life for Rural Montana"

***W.T. (Tim) Ryan
State Director***





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Photos from top to bottom: Polson School District received a Community Facilities grant for construction of a multi-purpose activities complex. A student and teacher at Kalispell Montessori School working on a computer. Kalispell Montessori School received a Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan from First Interstate Bank of Kalispell for a library addition. Historic manhole cover in Eureka. The Town of Eureka received a Wastewater loan and grant for wastewater system improvements. Aeration turbines treat Eureka's water.

Cover Photos from left to right: Summit Ranch, a therapeutic boarding school for troubled youth, received a Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan from Glacier Bank of Whitefish for construction. Big Sky Beveled Glass, a beveled glass manufacturer received loan funds from an Intermediary Relending Loan from Butte Local Development Corporation to purchase equipment. Homeowners building 'sweat equity' in their homes under Northwest Montana Human Resources' Self-Help Housing program.

Ann M. Veneman Secretary of Agriculture

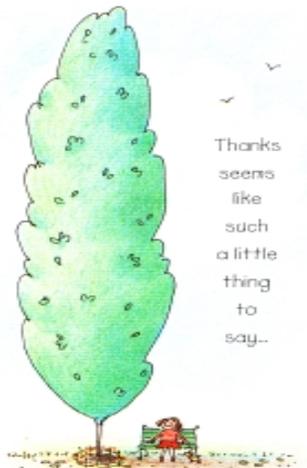
This past year the Bush Administration continued a strong commitment to expanding jobs and bringing renewed economic opportunities to rural America through strong leadership and strengthened programs.

One of the President's top priorities is to create new jobs and help spark economic growth. The tax relief package that the President signed into law in 2001 continues to help families throughout America and USDA's Rural Development programs are also creating new opportunities. In 2002, for example, economic grants and loans provided by USDA helped create or protect more than 150,000 rural jobs. As well, rural development programs provided more than \$12 billion in economic infrastructure grants and loans, helping improve education, healthcare, telecommunications, water treatment facilities, fire protection efforts, and other community centers.

However, USDA's commitment to improving rural America didn't stop there. Employees worked with local communities to provide homeownership financing for more than 42,000 families. These efforts are helping move closer to reaching the President's goal of increasing minority homeownership by fifty percent in five years.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 signed by the President last May provides new resources and programs aimed at making continued progress in rural America. This includes new grant programs to assist in the development of renewable energy sources; funding to expand the availability of information technologies; and financing for community water and wastewater improvements.

As we embark upon a new year, we have a strong agenda and many opportunities to strengthen America's rural communities. The Administration will continue to build upon the principles outlined in our policy publication, "Food and Agricultural Policy: Taking Stock for the New Century". Our team at USDA will continue working with all interested parties and build new coalitions to help families, create jobs and invest in America's rural sectors.



Thanks seems like such a little thing to say...

Thanks so much!
Kathi
Bethany
Retham
Jan
Stephen Mitchell
Aris

Every time you cross my mind, I thank you for the kindness of yours to God.
PHILIPPIANS 1:3 THE MESSAGE

...when you've blessed our lives in such a BIG way!
Just wanted to let you know we appreciate all that you did to help us get our new home! Thank you does seem a small thing to say!
The Ketchell Family



Thomas C. Dorr Under Secretary for Rural Development

A strong and vibrant economy in rural America serves as the cornerstone of President Bush's economic agenda. USDA Rural Development is working hard to expand economic opportunities and improve the quality of life for all of the 59 million Americans living in rural communities. Through the efficient and effective delivery of Rural Development initiatives, new jobs have been created, home ownership has increased and families and businesses have been strengthened. New investments and entrepreneurial spirit will continue to grow, bringing increased opportunity to rural areas.

I know and understand that rural Americans are resilient and share a pioneering spirit that will once again forge new frontiers in the future. In this same spirit, USDA Rural Development's challenge is to look beyond today and to envision a better way to work with America's rural communities to improve existing partnerships, and forge new ones.

In looking back over the last year, we have begun to build an economic foundation, shaped like what President Bush advocates. I am proud of the aggressive efforts by USDA Rural Development employees to quickly turn many of the 2002 Farm Bill provisions into new economic hope for America's farmers, ranchers and rural families. These efforts ensured the delivery of \$703 million to finance 377 communities water and wastewater infrastructure projects. Additionally, \$37 million helped support the development of 231 agricultural value-added ventures that will bring new opportunities for increased revenues to our American farmers and ranchers. In total, over \$12 billion was invested through USDA Rural Development programs in rural America in Fiscal Year 2002.

From fire hydrants to fiber optic cable – from sewers to symphonies – USDA Rural Development financial and technical assistance is making a positive difference. In Fiscal Year 2002 alone – 42,000 rural residents became first time homeowners, nearly 7,000 homeowners received loan and grant funding to make needed repairs and improvements, and 1,400 loans and grants were provided to assist communities finance essential community facilities. Electricity, telephone, water and wastewater infrastructure funding totaled over \$6.8 billion. Distance learning and telemedicine funding helped communities in 37 states gain access to modern technologies. Over 1,100 rural areas have clean drinking water and sanitary waste systems.

I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish. However, to meet ongoing and future challenges, USDA Rural Development will focus in 2003 on four critical areas of economic opportunity: Housing; Broadband; Bio-Mass; and Equity Capital

Housing – Rural Development has created a Five Star commitment to improving single-family housing lending to rural minority families as part of the President's minority homeownership initiative.

Broadband - Rural Development will implement approximately \$1 billion in Broadband programs, including a one-time "Community Connect" grant program to help small communities obtain access and training related to broadband services.

Bio-Mass - Rural Development will assist in the development of alternative energy combustibles to replace petroleum-based products through value-added grants and business and industry loan guarantees.

Equity Capital - The Farm Bill provides \$44 million in operational assistance grants and \$280 million in debenture guarantees for the Rural Business Investment Program (RBIP). The RBIP will increase the amount of capital available for investment in rural businesses and will provide technical assistance to these businesses.

Again, we have accomplished much in fiscal year 2002. I commit USDA Rural Development to administer all our programs and policies fairly, equitably, and honorably. It is the right thing to do, it is what I believe, and I will tolerate nothing less. Through our collective hard work we will continue to increase the economic opportunities in rural communities and improve the quality of life for all rural Americans.

W.T. (Tim) Ryan State Director

We should all be proud of what has been accomplished in rural Montana and throughout this country. The accomplishments outlined in this Annual Report, I believe, are a reflection of USDA's commitment to the residents of rural Montana.

We are pleased to report that in Fiscal Year 2002, Rural Development invested \$150,353,945 in loans and grants in rural Montana. These dollars went directly to projects which affect the everyday lives of rural Montanans—clean drinking water, business development, daycare centers, fire halls, emergency services, homeownership opportunities and affordable housing, just to name a few.

Rural Development would like to take this opportunity to thank our many partners throughout Montana who have worked closely with us to expand the use of our programs. I would also like to personally thank the dedicated Rural Development employees in Montana for their hard work. We must strive to continue to commit our resources to those communities most in need. Together, we will bring greater access to information technology, improve the economic base that drives local economies, and improve the quality of life for all citizens living in rural Montana.



Excerpt from an email sent to Tim Ryan from Dave Saffert, American Indian Program Coordinator, Rural Development National Office:

"The long and short of it is that Bob Gauthier began talking to the group about the importance of partnerships in Indian Country and he then started in on the Rural Development staff that they work with in Montana. He couldn't say enough positive things that Rural Development in Montana has done for his Tribe, including examples that he was giving in infrastructure, community facilities, and self-help housing, etc. The other thing he mentioned that he appreciated about RD was that even if they didn't have the funding for a particular need, they would provide technical assistance that was just as invaluable. I don't think that I have ever heard anyone person from outside the agency give so many positive testimonials about Rural Development in one setting. It's always good to know when one's actions are appreciated and it definitely made my day. I thanked him for his comments and advised him that I would also share his words with our Montana staff. So— if you could please pass on his appreciation and mine to your staff and let them know that their actions are becoming recognized at large in Indian Country and what a positive image your staff's activities are portraying in general about our agency. It definitely made my chest 'puff up' a little as Bob was speaking!"



Thank you, for all your hard work on helping us get this house.

Thanks,
Shailer Keeney &
family



RURAL BUSINESS-COOPERATIVE SERVICE

Across the state, Montanans are discouraged by the low income and the increasing trend for rural residents having to move from their small towns in order to find jobs.

In an effort to reverse that trend, and ensure the livelihood of our rural communities, the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) is working hard to identify and finance needed economic development projects.

RBS is the single largest source of economic development funds in the state of Montana. During Fiscal Year 2002, RBS provided \$40,354,229 in loans, loan guarantees, and grants, which assisted 334 businesses. An estimated 2,180 jobs were created or saved throughout Montana.

In the Business & Industry Guarantee program, we funded 142 projects totaling \$37.5 million with the balance coming from the National Office reserve. Montana's FY 02 state allocation was \$7.5 million. The \$37.5 million guaranteed ranked Montana 6th in total dollars and 2nd in the number of loans guaranteed nationally.

Montana tied for 6th in the nation in the total number of Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) issued and was one of 37 states to receive Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) funding.

Montana funded two Intermediary Relending

Program (IRP) loans for \$1,350,000. This was 4th in total dollars and tied for 7th in the nation for number of loans received. Montana now has the longest streak of any state by funding at least one IRP loan every year for the last ten years.

RBS initiated a new source of funding this year through the 2002 Farm Bill – the Value-Added Development Grant (VADG) program. The Farm Bill expanded the program and ensured its continuation for the duration of the 2002 Farm Bill.

The VADG program is designed to assist independent agricultural producers enter into value-added activities. Five of the eight applicants in Montana received funding through the VADG program this fiscal year.

Four states—Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, and Wyoming—participated in the Cooperative Stock Purchase Program to provide essential financing to the new Rocky Mountain Sugar Growers Cooperative. This program helped keep existing sugar factories in place, ensured sugar growers a place to process and market their crops, and aided in the start of a new agricultural cooperative. In Montana, RBS issued 128 Conditional Commitments to agricultural producers to purchase stock in the Rocky Mountain Sugar Growers Cooperative which bought out Western Sugar.

Program	Number of Loans/Grants	Total Dollars
Business & Industry Guarantee	142	\$37,548,650
Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG)	16	\$299,060
Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG)	1	\$10,000
Intermediary Relending Program (IRP)	2	\$1,350,000
Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG)	1	\$291,652
Value-Added Development Grant (VADG)	5	\$854,867
Totals	167	\$40,354,229

Zoot Enterprises

Zoot Enterprises, Inc. is a rapidly growing company providing instant credit decisioning services and loan origination software for companies such as Wells Fargo, American Express, and Visa. They average 200,000 credit-review transactions each day. The twelve-year old company had already moved five times to accommodate its growth and needed a large enough headquarters that would handle future growth needs. Over the past 4 years employment has grown from 20 to 130 employees and from 35 telecommunications lines to 200.

The \$18 million project was funded in part by a Montana Board of Investment loan and a commercial loan from Stockman Bank of Billings. Due to the size of the loan, Stockman Bank was unable to provide the loan without a Business & Industry Guarantee from USDA Rural Development. Since the guaranteed portion of the loan didn't count against its lending limit, Stockman Bank was able to provide the \$10 million commercial loan at competitive rates and terms.

Zoot's new 150,000 square foot building, located on a 35-acre business campus near Bozeman, Montana, will accommodate up to 450 employees and can be expanded if future growth warrants it. The business campus will include open spaces, trails, a trout pond and other amenities. The state-of-the-art structure is built with a level-4 seismic rating, which is the same standard held to San Francisco hospitals. This advanced earthquake resiliency is just one of many world-class technologies characterizing Zoot's new headquarters. The



Zoot Enterprises - New headquarters



Pictured left to right: Tim Ryan, State Director; U.S. Senator Burns; Secretary of Agriculture Veneman; MT Governor Martz; Chris Nelson, Zoot's President; USDA Deputy Under Secretary Neruda.

building will produce its own energy using the latest in fuel cell technology. Diesel generators and the local Power Company will provide back up for the fuel cells. The Zoot building incorporates the best available fiber-optic communications technology. For security, Zoot uses a combination of security doors equipped with specialized access devices—restricted key cards, thumbprint authorization and PIN technology. The 4,000-square foot computer room has its own dedicated power supply, an advanced fire suppression system, thumbprint security access and 1-inch thick bulletproof glass windows. This truly is a world class facility located right here in small town Montana.

Besides the technological capabilities, earthquake-proof security and state-of-the-art power systems, Zoot's headquarters shows detailed craftsmanship and quality. Most of the building materials and labor came from within Montana. In order to minimize the impact on the environment and set the stage for managing future growth, Zoot worked with the community to develop a water and sewer district.

Since its beginning, Zoot has prided itself on hiring from the local community. More than half of its employees are Montana State University graduates. Zoot expects to hire 200 more employees in the next five years. It is estimated that the company has an economic impact on the community in excess of \$10 million per year.



B&I Guarantee Program - FY 02 \$37,548,650		
County	Borrower	Lender
Fergus	Montana Sunflower Co.	Farmers State Bank
Flathead	Eagle Enterprises, LLC	Mountain West Bank
Flathead	M.L. Properties, LLC	Flathead Bank
Gallatin	GranTree Hotel	Mountain West Bank
Gallatin	Zoot Enterprises	Stockman Bank
Lake	Vickee Siemers & Bundy Management, Inc.	First Citizens Bank
Lewis & Clark	G.N. Hotel, LLC	First Madison Valley Bank
Lewis & Clark	Level Four Leasing & Administration, Inc.	Mountain West Bank
Missoula	American Eagle Instruments	Flathead Bank
Missoula	The Good Food Store, Inc.	U.S. Bank
Park	S.B. Smiley's, Inc.	Bank of the Rockies
Park	Thunderbird International Corp.	Bank of the Rockies
Ravalli	E.A.S.I., Inc.	First Citizens Bank
Statewide	Rocky Mountain Sugar Growers Cooperative (129)	Wells Fargo Bank

IRP - \$1,350,000

RBS obligated two Intermediary Relending Program loans (IRP) in Fiscal Year 2002.

Headwaters RC&D - \$600,000

Butte Local Development Corporation (BLDC) - \$750,000

This is the 5th IRP loan provided to BLDC for a total of \$3,817,835. With the latest loan, BLDC provided low-interest loans to five ultimate recipients, creating or saving 278 jobs in Butte. The ultimate recipients are:

Big Sky Beveled Glass

Big Sky General Rental

E-Docs, USA

Rocky Mountain Traffic Control

Triple S Building Center, Inc.

Montana has the longest streak of any state by funding at least one IRP loan every year for the last ten years.

Montana ranks 2nd in the nation for number of loans guaranteed and 6th in the nation in total dollars.

RBOG - \$10,000

RBS awarded one Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) in Fiscal Year 2002 to Powell County.

Rural Development funds will be used to develop a comprehensive community and economic development plan for the City of Deer Lodge and Powell County. Powell County Economic Development Corporation (PCEDC) is committed to expanding private enterprise that diversifies and strengthens the economic base and creates new opportunities for living wage jobs in Powell County. Powell County Population: 7180.

RCDG - \$291,652

RBS awarded a Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) in Fiscal Year 2002 to the Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC) at Montana State University-Northern.

Rural Development funds will be used to operate and expand the outreach of MCDC. MCDC provides assistance to and coordination for a network of Technical Assistance Providers and Mission Mountain Market, a cooperative development and food agri-business development center.

The overall goal of the grant is to help MCDC and its network alliance improve economic development in rural communities throughout Montana and its seven major Indian reservations. The grant will help the MCDC network provide technical assistance and resources to assist development of cooperative value-added enterprises.

Rural Business Enterprise Grants - FY 02 \$299,060		
County	Grant Recipients	Amount
Carbon	Beartooth RC&D	\$7,000
Carbon	Four Times Foundation	\$42,000
Fergus	Snowy Mountain Development Corp.	\$18,000
Flathead	Northwest Montana Human Resources	\$15,900
Flathead	Northwest Montana Human Resources	\$7,000
Flathead	Northwest Montana Human Resources	\$2,060
Gallatin	Career Transitions, Inc.	\$10,000
Hill	Bear Paw Development Corp.	\$18,000
Hill	Montana State University-Northern	\$19,000
Lake	Ktunaxa Community Development Corp.	\$21,000
Lake	Salish Kootenai College	\$24,900
Missoula	Missoula Area Economic Development Corp.	\$15,000
Roosevelt	Great Northern Development Corp.	\$27,000
Rosebud	Southeastern MT Development Corp.	\$3,120
Sanders	Sanders County Community Development Corp.	\$23,800
Valley	Ethanol Producers & Consumers	\$3,000

Montana Tamale Company

What started out as an unfortunate and negative situation over a year ago, has blossomed into a positive, job-creating project for a former Colstrip school. Since the mid 1990s, Colstrip, Montana has lost over 500 jobs in the local coal mining and power plant operations due to various external factors. The impact of this coal downsizing was reflected in the declining Colstrip school population, which forced one of the schools to close.

Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC) assisted the Colstrip School District in evaluating and pursuing private sector opportunities for the former school. Rural Development awarded SEMDC with an RBEG to purchase kitchen equipment to update and convert the closed school into a commercial kitchen which in turn will be leased to MT Tamale Co.

Reatha and Dan Montoya had a successful and growing business, but they had to commute over 300 miles per week to make the tamales in a commercial kitchen in another town. They were thinking about leaving town to find a better business environment. This project will not only save two and create two new jobs, but it will also keep a successful, growing food manufacturing business in the area.



Value-Added Development Grants - FY 02 \$854,867		
County	Recipients	Grant Amount
Cascade	Montana Grain Growers Assoc.	\$340,000
Lake	Amazing Grains	\$323,837
Lake	Flathead Native Agriculture Cooperative	\$100,000
Sanders	Peaks & Prairies Oil Seed Growers Cooperative	\$46,030
Sweet Grass	Northwest Natural Beef	\$45,000



Biofuels in the lab of Sustainable Systems LLC of Missoula, MT. Photo courtesy of Sustainable Systems.

Oil-Crop Growers Form Biofuel Co-op

USDA awarded a \$46,030 Value-Added Development Grant (VADG) to Montana Eco Fuels a.k.a. Peaks and Prairies Oil Seed Growers Cooperative. The agricultural producers are partnering with Sustainable Systems LLC, a Missoula based renewable energy research, development and commercialization company. Sustainable Systems developed the technology for efficiently processing canola, mustard and other oil seed crops into biofuels that can be used in diesel engines.

Diesel engines require no modifications to use the Montana biofuel, and it dramatically reduces emissions. In addition, the fuel is a superior lubricant, which reduces engine wear.

The Amazing Grains Story

USDA Rural Development, in collaboration with Montana's Association of Cooperative Development Centers and network of technical assistance providers, assisted in the formation of the Amazing Grains Cooperative. Amazing Grains developed a value-added, commercialized, gluten-free product from Indian Rice Grass.

Allergic reactions to gluten, a component of many common grains including wheat and barley, can be painful and can cause serious intestinal damage. Indian Rice Grass is a gluten-free native grass species gathered and utilized by American Indians before European settlement of the west and the introduction of maize. The use of this rice grass seed crop means that people who are gluten intolerant may be able to eat baked goods.

Rural Development awarded a \$323,837 Value-Added Development Grant (VADG) to Amazing Grains. The grant funds will be used for working capital to expand processing capacity and increase market share by being more competitive in domestic and international markets.

RBS 2002 Awardees

B&I Guarantee - Lender of the Year
Mountain West Bank, Helena

Intermediary Relending Program - Most Active Revolving Loan Fund
Butte Local Development Corporation

Rural Business Enterprise Grant - Outstanding Technical Assistance Provider
North West Regional RC&D

RBS Partnership Award - Providing Cooperative Development in Montana
Montana Cooperative Development Center

Mission Mountain Market

RURAL HOUSING SERVICE

Homeownership is the single most powerful tool a family can use to improve their quality of life. It is our goal at USDA Rural Development to help low income, rural residents achieve the dream of homeownership throughout Montana.

During the 2002 Fiscal Year, the Rural Housing Service (RHS) provided \$90,702,860 in loans, loan guarantees, and grants.

As in previous years, the **Single Family Housing** (SFH) Guaranteed Loan program was the most widely used, providing \$48,453,542 in guarantees to help 519 families purchase their own homes.

Through partnerships with local lenders, RHS was able to leverage \$9,905,380 in Section 502 direct loan funds with \$3,727,184 in private funds—making homeownership affordable for 181 very low to low income families. Montana was number one in the nation for 502 direct loans funded on American Indian reservations.

Assistance through the Section 504 program helped 110 families finance \$560,431 for needed repairs or improvements to their homes.

The **Multi-Family Housing** (MFH) programs provided \$1,757,010 in loans through the Section 515 program to help finance two new multi-family housing complexes.

One existing facility received \$307,500 through the Section 515 Repair/Rehabilitation program to improve living conditions for residents.

Rental costs were made more affordable through the provision of \$4,841,119 in Rental Assistance for 169 family units and 155 elderly units.

One Section 538 Guaranteed Loan was awarded to a 32-unit family rental facility located in Red Lodge, Montana for \$847,009.

Two Montana communities were successful in applying for the Housing Preservation Grant program (HPG) for a total of \$40,460. Seven housing units will be rehabilitated in Ekalaka and six units on the Flathead Reservation.

The **Community Facilities** (CF) division had a stellar year, with \$23,584,409 in loans, loan guaran-

Single Family Housing - FY 02 \$58,919,353		
Program	Families Assisted	\$ Amount
Guaranteed Loan	519	\$48,453,542
502 Direct Loan	181	\$9,905,380
504 Direct Loan	43	\$232,850
504 Grant	67	\$327,581

tees and grants. We achieved 216% of our goal and increased production by 132% over FY 2001. Each of our seven American Indian reservations received funding this year. An estimated 284 jobs will be created or saved throughout Montana.

Community Facilities Grants totaling \$1,528,486 were awarded to finance 22 projects, including 15 on Indian reservations. Montana received seven Tribal College Initiative grants, six Economic Impact Initiative grants and one Enterprise Community Set-Aside grant. Focused leveraging efforts resulted in a 501% match in private funding to ensure completion of identified projects.

Direct loan assistance through the Community Facilities program, which totaled \$4,486,000, was leveraged with \$1,568,748 in private funds.

The Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan program obligated nine loans for a total of \$17,569,923.



Ramona Breshears received a 504 Home Improvement Loan to eliminate health hazards and make her home warm and comfortable.



Photo by George Lane/Helena Independent Record

Members of the Erickson family sit on the deck of their new home. Pictured are, clockwise from top, Mindi (holding Aurora), Mindi's niece Jade, Tyler, Mauri and Caelon. The Ericksons qualified for both the Rural Development Guaranteed Loan Program and the GR8 HOPE Program.



Mr. & Mrs. Lyndon Roan live in an older house built in 1916. Their home was in need of several repairs. Most of the electrical in the home was the old knob and tube wiring. The plumbing was such that Mrs. Roan could not turn the faucets on and one of the toilets did not flush.

The Roans qualified for a 504 Home Improvement grant. Grant funds were used to repair and replace wiring throughout and to repair the plumbing.

The Roans are very happy with the repairs to their home. Prior to grant funds, they had heavy orange cords stretched from the two outlets in their home. Mrs. Roan uses a walker to get around, so the cords presented a real safety hazard. There are several outlets in the home now, instead of just the two, three-pronged outlets they had prior to the Rural Development grant.

All of the toilets in the house now work and they are able to use the tub. They were also able to replace an old coal stove with a new Heil furnace.

Nicole Buckles is the mother of three young children. She came to Rural Development, on the advice of friends, seeking a home loan to provide housing for her children. With no money available for a down payment, she was unable to get financing through conventional methods.

After qualifying for a 502 Direct Loan and the Neighborhood Housing Program, the Buckles now have a wonderful home with a huge yard that they can proudly call their own.



Multi Family Housing - FY 02 \$8,199,098				
Program	County	Recipient	\$ Amount	Project Description
515 New Construction Loan	Flathead	Teakettle Vista Apartments	\$1,000,000	24-unit elderly facility
515 New Construction Loan	Lake	Salish & Kootenai Housing Authority	\$757,010	12-unit family facility
515 Repair Loan	Gallatin	South Lake Apartments	\$307,500	Repair/replace roof, dormer system, sidewalks, interior floors, playground area.
538 Guaranteed Loan	Carbon	Mountain View Apartments	\$847,009	32-unit family facility Lender-Wells Fargo Bank
Housing Preservation Grant	Carter	Town of Ekalaka	\$20,460	7 housing units
Housing Preservation Grant	Flathead	Salish & Kootenai Tribes	\$20,000	6 housing units
Self-Help Grant	Flathead	Northwest Montana Human Resources, Inc.	\$10,000	Pre-development Grant 8 families
Self-Help Grant	Flathead	Northwest Montana Human Resources, Inc.	\$396,000	Technical Assistance Grant 24 families
521 Rental Assistance			\$4,841,119	



This Mutual Self-Help Housing project will provide the opportunity for 20 families to construct their own homes on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

To celebrate Homeownership Month, several Rural Development employees rolled up their sleeves and joined the building efforts of eight families at a Mutual Self-Help housing project in Kalispell. Two exterior walls were built and raised in two hours. "It was greatly appreciated and a rewarding effort for all involved," said Doug Rauthe, Executive Director of Northwest Montana Human Resources.



Kalispell Self-Help Housing Project

Northwest Montana Human Resources (NMHR) received \$406,000 in Rural Development grants. Funds were used to develop a Mutual Self-Help program and recruit eight initial families within Flathead County. This project will ultimately provide assistance to a total of 24 families to construct their own homes.

There was tremendous ‘partnering’ by different community businesses to provide support to the families for this project.

American Land Development provided house plans free of charge.

The realtor reduced his fee by 1%.

Rural Development reduced the appraisal fee to \$150/per family based on the total appraisal fees of \$1200.

Citizen’s Title reduced their closing fee 50% to \$125; they forgave the FedEx fee of \$22.50 and reduced the cost of title insurance by 30%, saving each family a minimum of \$195.

Mountain West Bank returned the interest of a loan taken out by NMHR for purchase of the first eight lots in June of 2001. The interest at loan closing on April 1, 2002 was \$3,128.87, which after paid, the Bank issued a check to NMHR. The money was used to purchase tools for each family and purchase materials for a job shack on the site which was split into two storage sheds and given away to two of the families when the construction was complete. NMHR also provided shovels for all the families at groundbreaking.

Memoirs of an Amateur Housebuilder

Trying to summarize the experiences of the last ten months in a few short sentences is next to impossible for a former English teacher. So I shall ramble on to my heart’s content. Here’s my take on it.

The March meetings so long ago gave only a

"This is the best thing I've ever done in my life." -Steve

glimpse of what would come to pass so many months later. We meet the players in this drama—eight family units, so innocent and eager to give whatever is necessary to move us all in by the holidays. The cast is expanded—we meet those behind the scene who will pull the strings, run the reports, sign the checks, order the supplies, approve our credit, give moral support, feed us, encourage, teach, praise and most important to me, give hugs. Doug Jim, Jan, USDA Rural Development’s Carol and John, all the support people whose names and faces we’ll never know at Northwest Montana Human Resources and the USDA Rural Development who cheered us on, and of course, our fearless leader Alex.

Weeks pass and we gather on a blizzarding April Fool’s Day, a fitting occasion for a gift of shovels and a groundbreaking ceremony to toast our future...Later in the month we plunge in, equipped with tool belts and Rubbermaid totes filled with strange and wondrous things. We survey, excavate, move earth, build forms, pour footings, play with giant pink Lego pieces, tie together what seems like miles of rebar, pour foundations. One day we are able to walk on our subfloors where someday our houses will stand.

"You can't beat this program as long as you have the hours to put into it." -Casey

"Who left that expensive tool in the dirt?" and "Who left this !&#@###! coffee cup here?!" I duck as yet another of my coffee cups is suddenly airborne, flung out of the shed door. I lose more coffee that way. In time, I quit the habit. Less expensive that way. "This needs to be redone, guys," we hear Alex say, who is always looking for our best efforts. "I didn't do it!" we respond in unison.

Spring turns to summer as we see walls erected and mosquitoes the size of a Cessna 172 take flight. Ankle deep mud dries up and armies of women lift roof truss after roof truss to the

outstretched hands of men balancing on top of skeletal houses, while spec home construction workers watch in awe from across the street, and smirk behind their sandwiches as cranes set theirs in place. Roofing, not a favorite activity, goes slowly, eventually needing professional help to speed things up. Volunteers come and go, some never to be seen again, while others become surrogate family members. We thank God for all of them.

"This was the hardest thing that I've ever done. Now that it is over, I have a home and a life."
-Leslie

Summer passes and with it the heat that so many found unbearable. I relish wearing tank tops and everywhere are water bottles. If unlabeled it's fair game for Alex. Then summer is over and I realize I never saw Glacier Park, tasted a huckleberry or went on a single picnic. But we do partake in Saturday BBQ's, several family members' home cooking, Rosauer's peanut butter chocolate chip cookies and lemonade.

I see eager smiling faces become strained and jaws tighten as the months drag on. North vs. South, worries over why that house is so far along while that one has no roof, and it's going to rain again tonight!, "Who's taking my tools again?", "She's not putting in her share of hours" and all the petty bickering and grumbling and rumors that abound because we're all just so tired.

"We sure appreciate this program!" -Ray

"How goes the battle?" Alex asks a million times over. Sometimes he gets a positive answer, sometimes a very negative complaint, and at other times he gets a stony silence, or grumbling under our breaths. But we know we must go on, watching and waiting for that light at the end of the tunnel, for no one will finish our houses for us.

In September the siding begins, and we can now add smashed thumbs to our accumulating injuries, along with muscle aches, sawdust filled lungs and eyes, stapled and nailed body parts,

"This program turned my life around." -Brad

mosquito bites, and allergies, and the occasional bruised and hurt feelings. We choose carpet and vinyl, kitchen and bath cabinetry, exterior paint combinations (sometimes several paint combinations), lighting and ceiling fans. Driveways and sidewalks appear, making us feel like VIPs as we trek to the dumpster and Andy Gump (affectionate term for our porta-potty where there were several Sasquatch sightings). We paint and paint and paint endless acres of walls and ceilings for weeks on end. Some of us become experts. All of us becoming experts at whatever task seemed to become our personal specialty, usually not voluntarily. Doors are hung—over 100 of them. Kitchens and baths gradually become functional, and what a thrill when the sinks and toilets and water heaters and appliances are installed! Just like a real house...

Now the flooring is down and we are handed a key and a wish for good luck. Carefully chosen wreaths decorate our own homes, where once a dirt lot existed. On Christmas Eve night just before midnight I take walk. I make the loop, Buttercup Loop, and smile as I pass my new neighbors' houses. Everyone is home, all cars in their respective driveways (their garages as full of moving boxes as mine) and I see a lit Christmas tree in most every window. Eight families enjoying their first Christmas in their new homes. It made me warm and teary eyed as I remembered back through all the long hours, the disappointments, the thrills, the laughter and jokes exchanged, the making of new friends and the straining of those same new friendships. And I wish, this time with fondness Alex would say to us just one more time, "This doesn't need to be redone, guys. It's perfect!" so we could all answer in unison, "WE DID IT!"

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart for my second chance.

-Respectfully submitted by Sandy Thornton, senior member of the "Buttercup Eight".

"I live in the greatest neighborhood now."
-Sandy



A Tribal Literacy Center

Chief Dull Knife College located on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation in eastern Montana was in need of funding to construct a literacy center.

Rural Development provided a Community Facilities Grant of \$104,170 under a special Tribal College Initiative. The funds were leveraged with Oprah Foundation funds as well as Chief Dull Knife College contributions. The college is receiving volunteer labor and technical support from the Red Feather Development Group whose mission is to assist Indian reservations in housing and community development. The Red Feather Development Group has formed a collaborative partnership with the University of Washington and Penn State University to provide technical assistance and volunteer labor for these essential tribal projects.

The 1,500 square foot literacy center will provide services for adult and early childhood reading development for the Northern Cheyenne Indian Tribe. The services will include family literacy programs, GED classes and evening reading programs.

Community involvement in the building process will give tribal members hands-on participation in the betterment of their own community. At the same time, they will learn a tremendous amount about straw bale construction methods.



Community Facilities Grants - FY 02 \$1,528,486		
County	Recipient	\$ Amount
Big Horn	Little Big Horn College	\$102,410
Blaine	Fort Belknap College	\$50,000
Blaine	Fort Belknap Indian Community	\$70,000
Carbon	Roberts School District	\$50,250
Fergus	C.M. Medical Facilities, Inc.	\$16,443
Fergus	Grass Range School District	\$50,000
Glacier	Blackfeet Community College	\$102,410
Glacier	Blackfeet Tribe	\$36,000
Glacier	Town of Browning	\$24,000
Hill	Chippewa Cree Community Development	\$100,000
Hill	Stone Child College	\$135,000
Jefferson	Liberty Place, Inc.	\$50,000
Lake	Polson School District #23	\$64,050
Lake	Salish Kootenai College	\$102,410
Lincoln	TFS Volunteer Fire Department	\$16,798
Mineral	St. Regis Community Council	\$50,000
Roosevelt	Fort Peck Community College	\$200,000
Roosevelt	Fort Peck Community College	\$100,000
Roosevelt	Fort Peck Tribes	\$64,545
Rosebud	Dull Knife Memorial College	\$102,410
Rosebud	Dull Knife Memorial College	\$1,760
Sanders	Dixon Public School District #9	\$40,000
Community Facilities Direct Loans - FY 02 \$4,486,000		
County	Borrower	\$ Amount
Custer	Miles Community College	\$1,500,000
Dawson	Action For Eastern Montana	\$100,000
Jefferson	Liberty Place, Inc.	\$900,000
Park	Community Health Partners, Inc.	\$925,000
Richland	Savage Agricultural, Vocational & Growth	\$261,000
Silver Bow	Butte Silver Bow Primary Health Care	\$800,000

Community Facilities Guaranteed Loans - FY 02 \$17,569,923			
County	Borrower	Lender	\$ Amount
Carbon	Joliet Emergency Medical Services	United Bank	\$80,000
Custer	Miles Community College	Stockman Bank	\$370,000
Deer Lodge	Community, Counseling & Correctional Services, Inc.	American Federal Savings Bank	\$9,351,637
Flathead	Kalispell Montessori Center	First Interstate Bank	\$91,145
Flathead	Summit Ranch	Glacier Bank	\$6,164,000
Lake	Salish Kootenai College	Community Bank	\$379,000
Madison	Madison Valley Women's Club	Valley Bank of Belgrade	\$175,000
Missoula	Fort Courage Child Care	First National Bank	\$759,141
Silver Bow	Butte Silver Bow Primary Health Care	Glacier Bank	\$200,000

Montana was #1 in the nation for 502 Direct Loans funded on American Indian reservations. Each of our seven American Indian reservations received Community Facilities funding this year.

RHS 2002 Awardees

Guaranteed Rural Housing Lender of the Year
Montana Mortgage Company

Direct Loan Lender of the Year
American Federal Savings Bank

Community Facilities Program Lender of the Year
First Interstate Bank

Rural Housing Partner of the Year
Montana Board of Housing

Multi-Family Site Manager of the Year
Lonnie McDermott, Big Timber Village

Multi-Family 2nd Place Site Manager of the Year
Gayle & John McCarron, Ksanka Court Apts, Eureka



Pictured above: Tim Ryan, State Director, presenting a check to eager Kalispell Montessori Center students.

Kalispell Montessori Center, an elementary school serving the Flathead Valley received a \$91,145 loan guarantee through First Interstate Bank. Funds were used to build a 1,550 square foot library addition. Pictured right: Inside the new library addition at an Open House Ceremony.





RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE

The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is committed to ensuring that all rural Montana residents have access to safe drinking water and sanitary waste disposal.

By financing these projects, RUS is making an investment in the future of our communities—helping them to improve basic public health, enhance fire protection, attract new homes and businesses, and conserve natural resources.

During the 2002 Fiscal Year, RUS provided \$18,258,800 in loans and grants to finance 20 water and wastewater projects throughout the state.

Completion of these projects will help an estimated 4,631 households and 924 businesses in our small communities.

In the signing of the 2002 Farm Bill by President Bush, Rural Development was given the authority to convert \$360 million in funds for a one-time reduction in the backlog of pending applications to construct or improve water and waste disposal facilities and emergency community water systems.

Eight Montana communities received over \$7 million dollars in funding through the 2002 Farm Bill allocation.

RUS staff met with all seven of Montana’s Indian reservations and funded three projects for a total of \$3,342,400 or approximately 20% of our total FY 2002 funding.

The Blackfeet Tribe will use Rural Development funds to improve the Blackfeet Tribal Two Medicine water project. This project will eventually provide water to the reservation communities of Browning and East Glacier.

The Salish & Kootenai Tribes received two RUS grants to improve the water and wastewater systems in Elmo, Montana. These improvements will allow the Salish & Kootenai Tribes to develop essential Tribal housing. Additionally, these projects will help maintain the pristine quality of Flathead Lake, the largest natural lake located in Northwestern Montana.

In addition to financing water and waste

Water Projects - FY 02					
County	Recipient/Borrower	Grant \$	Loan \$	Total \$	
Carter	Town of Ekalaka		\$136,000	\$136,000	
Flathead	Sheaver's Creek Water District	\$700,000*	\$381,700*	\$1,081,700*	
Garfield	Town of Jordan		\$463,900	\$463,900	
Glacier	Blackfeet Tribe	\$118,800*		\$118,800*	
Glacier	Blackfeet Tribe	\$154,700		\$154,700	
Judith Basin	Geyser Judith Basin County Water & Sewer District	\$294,000*	\$219,000*	\$513,000*	
Judith Basin	Town of Stanford	\$192,400	\$1,144,900	\$1,337,300	
Lake	Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes	\$966,500*	\$291,800*	\$1,258,300*	
Lincoln	Town of Rexford	\$219,300*	\$275,700*	\$495,000*	
Sanders	Town of Hot Springs	\$150,000	\$750,000	\$900,000	
Sanders	Town of Hot Springs	\$650,000*	\$225,600*	\$875,600*	
Wibaux	Town of Wibaux		\$220,000	\$220,000	
*2002 Farm Bill Backlog Funding		Totals	\$3,445,700	\$4,108,600	\$7,554,300



Wastewater Projects - FY 02				
County	Recipient/Borrower	Grant \$	Loan \$	Total \$
Blaine	Town of Chinook	\$1,300,000	\$1,500,000	\$2,800,000
Gallatin	RAE Subdivision Water & Sewer District	\$300,000	\$200,000	\$500,000
Garfield	Town of Jordan		\$90,200	\$90,200
Judith Basin	Town of Stanford		\$990,000	\$990,000
Lake	Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes	\$764,800	\$319,300	\$1,084,100
Lake	Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes	\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000
Lake	Lake County Charlo Water & Sewer District	\$900,000	\$549,700	\$1,449,700
Madison	Madison County Alder Water & Sewer District	\$390,000	\$255,500	\$645,500
Roosevelt	City of Wolf Point		\$1,450,000*	\$1,450,000*
Sanders	Town of Plains		\$695,000	\$695,000
*2002 Farm Bill Backlog Funding Totals		\$4,654,800	\$6,049,700	\$10,704,500

projects, RUS provides loans and grants for the completion of Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) projects.

Three Montana organizations were awarded DLT grants totaling \$1,038,056. The grants will invest in infrastructure projects that assist rural

communities with communications and medical services. The grants will provide rural communities access to better, faster, and more modern health care as well as provide students in rural areas with better equipment and learning tools and access to courses that would otherwise be unavailable.



Almost 5,000 households will benefit from safer drinking water and more sanitary waste disposal.

Intake line for the Two Medicine Water project on the Blackfeet Reservation. This project will eventually provide water to the reservation communities of Browning and East Glacier.

The Community of Troy Rebuilds!

Outline Of Need: The community of Troy, Montana did not have a municipal wastewater system. A high number of failing septic tanks, marginal or non-existent on-site wastewater systems combined with high groundwater conditions created a dire need for a municipal wastewater system.

How Rural Development Helped: Rural Development provided two loans for a total of \$2,427,500 and two grants for a total of \$2,906,600. Other funds included a \$400,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and a \$500,000 Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) grant. Troy's wastewater project was completed in two phases. The first phase was to construct the treatment facility and provide sewer to the downtown area. The second phase was to provide sewer for the balance of the Town.

The Results: The major industries in the Troy area have been timber and mineral extraction. The silver mine shut down in the mid 90's and the timber industry has had severe setbacks resulting in economic instability in this area. Recognizing they had to do something to survive, the town came together and focused on its internal assets to create economic development. Recreation has been the cornerstone of that focus.

After completion of the first phase of the wastewater system, the community constructed a new firehall that houses the power department, fire trucks, water and sewer public works offices, and shops. They built a pavilion near the river with picnic and camping facilities. With grants from Fish Wildlife and Parks, they built a fishing pond near the town that is stocked with trout. They also constructed a soccer field using donations and volunteer time and efforts. The soccer field is regarded as the best in the area and teams from Libby to Canada travel to play there, thus keeping motels and other services busy. The community plans on utilizing the same strategy for a baseball field.

To construct the soccer fields, Troy used donated heavy machinery and volunteer drivers. The town only had to pay for gas. Volunteers laid the sod. Materials were donated for the picnic pavilion—a beautiful log home type structure. The construction was used to teach local teens the skill of erecting these buildings. Troy has become a very dynamic town with numerous new buildings and businesses. The streets and yards are clean and well groomed. Troy is a great example of how a community pulled together to rebuild after seeing their economy shattered by the loss of their core business.

Salish & Kootenai Wastewater Project



Photo of a groundbreaking ceremony for the Salish & Kootenai Tribes (S&K). Pictured left to right: Ron Trahan, St. Ignatius Representative, S&K Tribal Council; Maggie Goode, Hot Springs Representative, S&K Tribal Council; Sam Barber, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners for Salish Kootenai Housing Authority; Tim Ryan, State Director, Rural Development; Kenny Friedlander, Ktunaxa Community Development Corporation Board of Directors; Mitch Copp, RUS Program Director, Rural Development.

Thompson Falls Water & Sewer Improvements

\$2,784,600 Loans & \$1,194,700 Grants



2002 \$230,000 RD Grant/\$610,400 RD Loan

Water Source Improvements—Ashley Creek

Ashley Creek is the main source of water for the City. Until recently, the City had a waiver from the Surface Water Treatment Rule of the Safe Drinking Water Act. However, avalanches in the source water basin resulted in debris in the stream. An Administrative Order from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) was issued and required the City to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act. Over one mile of pipe was installed from the springs to the water tank as an alternative to constructing a treatment plant. As a result, residents continue to enjoy drinking natural spring water.

1999 \$690,900 RD Loan

Water Distribution System Improvements

Due to continuous population growth and continuing water losses through leaking distribution system mains and inadequate fire flows, the City replaced prioritized water mains and added water meters. Water losses were reduced significantly saving approximately 330,000 gallons per day in lost water.

1998 \$140,000 RD Grant/\$251,800 RD Loan

Sanitary Sewer System Improvements

The City rehabilitated leaking sewer mains and connected homes on septic tanks that were leaking into the Thompson Falls River. They also upgraded a wastewater lagoon that was leaking and not treatable to wastewater discharge permit limits.

1996 \$824,700 RD Grant/\$162,500 RD Loan

Water System Improvements

The water system was upgraded to reduce leaks and include water meters.

Previous Funding:

1984 \$975,000 RD Loan

1987 \$94,000 RD Loan

Photos

*Top - Ashley Creek Water Project.
Middle - Digging a trench to lay the pipe.
Bottom - Collection box for the Spring water.*

East Missoula Wastewater Project



Currently, East Missoula's wastewater service is provided by individual, on-site systems consisting of septic tanks and cesspools. To protect the sole source aquifer—the drinking water source for the Missoula area—Rural Development funded a wastewater collection system for East Missoula, which is upstream of Missoula. The above photos show the connection of the new East Missoula collection system to the City of Missoula's sewer system. All wastewater will be treated at the Missoula wastewater treatment plant.

Blackfeet Water Project

Photo of the intake line for the Two Medicine Water project on the Blackfeet Reservation. Two Medicine Lake is an environmentally and culturally sensitive area.

During the environmental assessment, historic American Indian campsites were found on the lakeshore. To minimize the impact to this culturally sensitive area, the construction crew is using underground drilling techniques to install the pipe. Construction is taking place over the Fall and Winter months to minimize impact to lynx, grizzly bear and eagle habitat. The treatment plant will be constructed a couple of



miles from the lake to further reduce environmental concerns. This project will eventually provide water to the reservation communities of Browning and East Glacier.



Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grants - FY 02 \$1,038,156		
Counties	Recipient	Grant \$
Blaine, Hill, Glacier, Fergus, Roosevelt, Cascade	Montana State University-Northern	\$398,785
Custer, Dawson, Fallon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Prairie, Richland, Wibaux	Eastern Montana Education Telecommunications	\$430,071
Rosebud, Yellowstone	Deaconess Billings Clinic Foundation	\$209,300

Eastern Montana Education Telecommunications

The Eastern Montana Education Telecommunications (EMET) is a consortium, which will use grant funds for distance learning purposes for rural K-12 schools and community colleges. Distance Learning for rural students, special education, adult education, professional development, workforce development, and other community education purposes will be the predominant uses of the system. The expected benefits of this project which include fewer miles traveled, reduced out-migration, increased local training opportunities, access to quality educational opportunities will reach nearly

Over 7,000 students in rural areas will receive better equipment and learning tools and access to courses that would otherwise be unavailable.

4,000 students in 13 rural eastern Montana public K-12 schools and over 1,000 full-time and 600 part-time students in two local community colleges.

RUS 2002 Awardees

RUS Public Service Innovation Award
David Ewer, INTERCAP

RUS Public Service Innovation Award
Thelma McClosky Armstrong, Eastern Montana Telemedicine Network

Award of Merit
City of Red Lodge

Award of Merit
City of Thompson Falls

Environmental Stewardship Award
City of Troy

RUS Success!

RUS Engineer, Karen Bucklin-Sanchez, initiated and coordinated a Value Engineering Study (VE) for the Blackfeet Community water project. The VE Team completed the final study and provided it to the Tribe in February 2002. Savings on this \$13 million project due to the VE is projected to be \$1,146,511.

Montana's Indian reservations received 20% of FY 2002 RUS funds.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & OUTREACH

Town Meetings

Montana USDA Rural Development hosted three Town Meetings in Kalispell, Sidney and Miles City. Rural Development staff and state and local officials provided information on funding programs to community leaders, lenders, local development organizations, local elected officials and congressional representatives. These three meetings covered 20 counties including Carter, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Flathead, Garfield, Lake, Lincoln, McCone, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sanders, Sheridan, Treasure, Valley, Wibaux and the Flathead Indian Reservation.



State Meeting

We held a statewide borrower information conference, attended by Secretary Veneman, Deputy Under Secretary Neruda, Montana Governor Martz, U.S. Senator Baucus, and U.S. Senator Burns. There were over 300 attendees from across the state.

RHS Outreach

Montana continually participates in homebuyer education. We hosted four on-reservation Housing Fairs in FY 2002. Rural Development staff continues to be involved in monthly teleconferences with the Native American Lenders' Task Force, a group of federal and state agencies, lenders and others interested in providing safe and affordable housing on Montana Indian reservations. Montana cooperated with Fannie Mae in the implementation of the 2nd Annual Tribal Housing Symposium, which is another home ownership promotion partnership involving Tribal Housing Authorities, Tribal attorneys, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fannie Mae, lenders, and USDA Rural Development. Monthly office days are held on many Indian reservations.



"Grandma got her furnace yesterday. Thanks, she is so happy. Thanks again for all your help & hard work." -Carol

RUS Outreach

Program presentations were made on 12 occasions where multiple communities were present. RUS staff meets regularly with Montana Rural Water, Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP), and the state Water, Waste Water and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team (W₂SACT), the interagency infrastructure group.

"Thanks for all your help and patience with the purchase of the Community Health Partners and Wellness Building. Your assistance was outstanding!"-Ted and All of CHP



Indian Reservations

The State Director and staff made approximately 50 visits to Montana's seven Indian reservations. These visits were used to promote Rural Development programs, provide technical assistance, and participate in community development activities.

Montana Rural Development continues to provide technical assistance to Enterprise Community/Champion designated communities and the Tribal College National Center for Excellence at Fort Peck Community College. All of these entities are involved in implementing strategic plans and benchmarking their progress in promoting sustainable community development.



RBS Outreach

The Cooperative Services program provided technical assistance to 102 groups in FY 2002, a 44% increase over 2001. RBS staff attended 155 meetings to promote RBS programs.

"I just wanted to say thank you very much for your support of this project (Rae Water & Sewer). I believe it will be a model facility and it is wonderful to have the support from people like you to make it happen." -David

PHOTOS Top left: Montana's Statewide Annual Meeting General Session, the crowd listens to Deputy Under Secretary Mike Neruda. Bottom left: Display sign. Top right: Panelist for the Native American Housing Symposium, pictured 2nd from left is Kathy Kaufman, Billings Office Community Development Manager. Bottom right: Secretary of Agriculture Veneman and U.S. Senator Burns address the crowd at the Annual Meeting.



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Al Lazarewicz, Multi-Family Housing Specialist
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Michele McLeod, RHS Technician
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Karen Sanchez, Engineer
Judy Broadwater, RUS Specialist
Shad Weber, RUS Specialist
Pat Henninger, RUS Technician

USDA Rural Development serves rural Montana through the State Office in Bozeman and seven Local Offices across the state. Each Local Office has a designated service area listed below. For more information on our programs, please contact us.

LOCAL OFFICES

The following acronyms are used to refer to staff positions within the Local Offices:

CDM - Community Development Manager
CDS - Community Development Specialist
CDT - Community Development Technician

BILLINGS LOCAL OFFICE

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(406) 657-6294 FAX
Kathy Kaufman, CDM
Nikki Stahley, CDS
Diana Robertson, CDT
COUNTIES SERVED: Big Horn, Carbon, Carter, Custer, Fallon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Powder River, Rosebud, Stillwater, Treasure, Yellowstone, Crow and Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservations

BOZEMAN LOCAL OFFICE

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Sandi Messinger, CDS
Marilynn Driver, CDT
COUNTIES SERVED: Gallatin, Meagher, Park, Sweet Grass and Wheatland

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 Debbie Swanson, CDM
 Earlene Sexton, CDS
 Jo Hart, CDT
 COUNTIES SERVED: Blaine, Daniels, Dawson,
 Garfield, McCone, Phillips, Prairie, Richland,
 Roosevelt, Sheridan, Valley, Wibaux, Fort
 Belknap and Fort Peck Indian Reservations

GREAT FALLS LOCAL OFFICE

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 Great Falls, MT 59404
 (406) 727-7580 ext. 4
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 Cindy Stene, CDM
 Judy Bixby, CDS
 Gail Streich, CDT
 COUNTIES SERVED: Cascade, Chouteau, Fergus,
 Hill, Judith Basin, Liberty, Petroleum, Pondera,
 Teton, Toole and Rocky Boy’s Indian Reservation

HELENA LOCAL OFFICE

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 Helena, MT 59601
 (406) 449-5000 ext. 4
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 Cindy Donnell, CDM
 Michelle Shoquist, CDS
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 COUNTIES SERVED: Beaverhead, Broadwater,
 Deer Lodge, Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, Madison,
 Powell and Silver Bow

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 COUNTIES SERVED:
 Flathead, Glacier, Lake, Lincoln, Flathead and
 Blackfeet Indian Reservations

MISSOULA LOCAL OFFICE

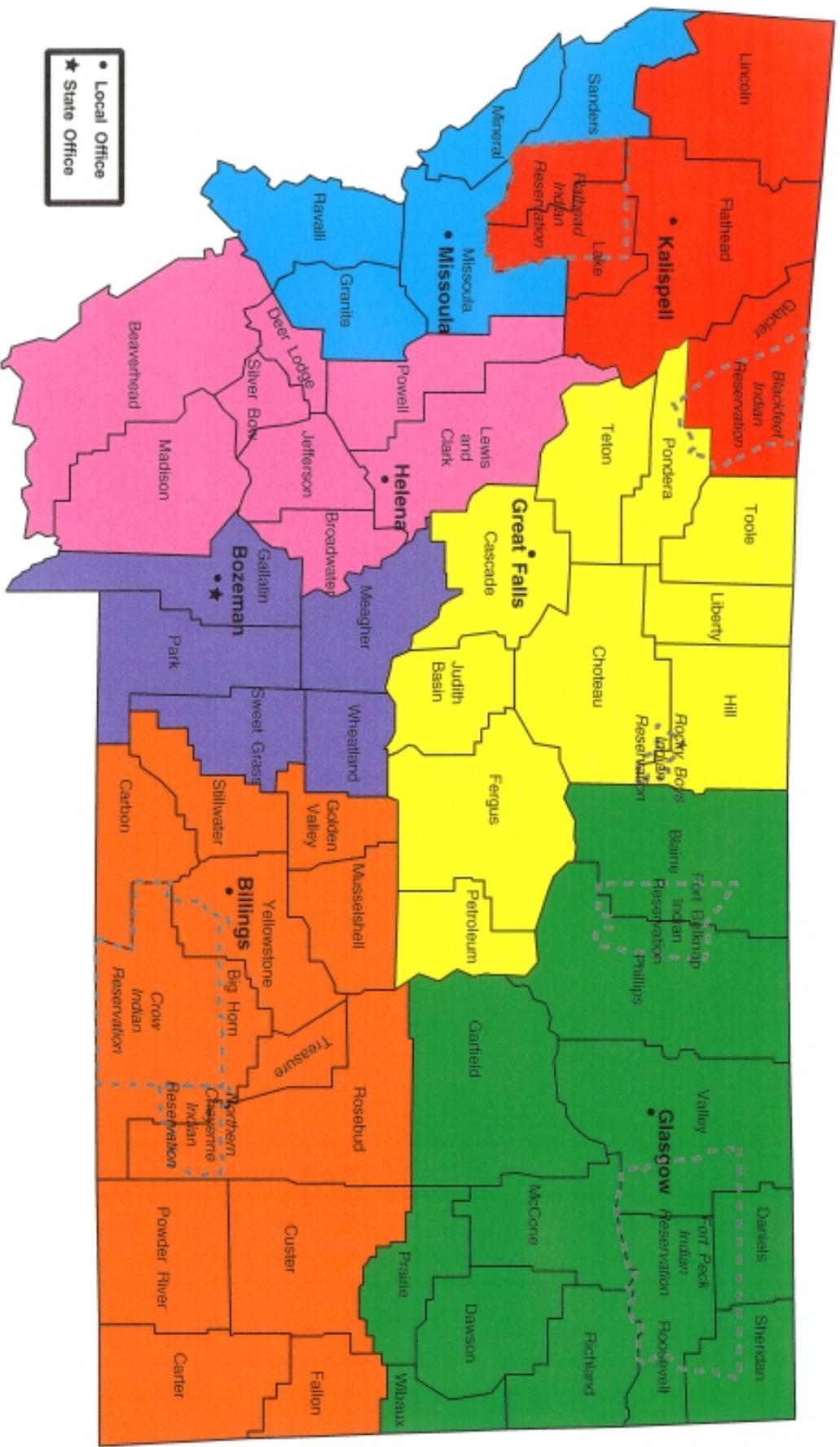
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 Ravalli and Sanders



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