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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

USDA ANNOUNCES FUNDING ASSISTANCE TO THREE NORTH DAKOTA BUSINESSES

Guaranteed Loans Provided Through Recovery Act Funds Help Local Businesses Create jobs.

BISMARCK, February 17, 2010 – USDA Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider today announced that three North Dakota businesses, Medora Environmental, Inc, Minot Hospitality Partners LLC, and RediFlame Inc, have been selected to receive a total of \$8.85 million in guarantee loans through The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The financing will support businesses to increase productivity, buy new equipment, and boost inventory while highlighting the Secretary's priorities of wealth creation, locally owned and managed businesses, creating new job opportunities, and keeping people in the community.

"This week marks the year anniversary of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act," State Director Jasper Schneider said. "These three projects are great examples of stimulus dollars at work in North Dakota."

The three North Dakota projects announced by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack are part of the 54 rural businesses receiving \$144 million in loan guarantees through funding made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The funding is authorized through USDA Rural Development's Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program. The program received \$1.57 billion through the Act to help rural businesses stimulate economic development.

One project is Medora Environmental, Inc., Dickinson, N.D., selected to receive a \$3 million loan guarantee through American Bank Center in Dickinson, providing additional working capital and debt amortization which will save jobs in the Dickinson area. Medora Environmental, Inc. (MEI) is a green manufacturer that designed and patented the SolarBee, which is a solar powered high volume water circulation system that improves water quality in lakes, raw drinking water reservoirs, wastewater ponds, potable reservoirs, storm water ponds and industrial ponds.

Another project, Minot Hospitality Partners, LLC, Minot, N.D., has been selected to receive a \$5 million loan guarantee through American Bank Center in Minot, for construction of a 75-room extended-stay hotel under the "Mainstay Suites" banner. The project will help reduce the shortage of hotel rooms brought on by the recent Bakken Oil exploration boom, the addition of a new bomber wing to the Minot Air Force Base, and the increased travel of Canadian customers.

The third project RediFlame Inc., Finley, N.D., has been selected to receive an \$850,000 loan guarantee through Citizens State Bank, Cooperstown, N.D., for the purchase of a new wood chip dryer and working capital to meet production demand and build inventory. Located in the federally designated Griggs/Steele Empowerment Zone, RediFlame products, including 100 percent All Natural Fire Logs and Wood Grillers, are easy-to-light and easy-to-handle products and have become leaders in the grilling, camping and fireplace industries. With state-of-the-art production, packaging and storage facilities, RediFlame products are sold internationally across the U.S. and Canada.

Eligible applicants for USDA [Rural Development's Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program](#) include private businesses, cooperative organizations, corporations, partnerships, non-profit groups, Federally recognized Indian tribes, public bodies and individuals. The funds are targeted to create and retain quality jobs and serve difficult-to-reach populations and areas hardest hit by the current economic downturn.

More information about USDA's Recovery Act efforts is available at www.usda.gov/recovery. More information about the Federal Government's efforts on the Recovery Act is available at www.recovery.gov.

Funding is contingent upon borrowers meeting conditions in the loan agreement.

"USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender."

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800)795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development fosters growth in homeownership, finances business development, and supports the creation of critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA Rural Development's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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