



# NEWS RELEASE

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## USDA AWARDS \$4.5 MILLION FOR 23 RURAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

WASHINGTON, August 7, 2008 – Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas C. Dorr today announced the selection of 23 Rural Cooperative Development Centers to receive more than \$4.5 million in grants to help improve economic conditions in rural areas in 22 states.

“Rural Cooperative Development Centers have a proven record of developing entrepreneurs and growing businesses,” Dorr said. “They help farmers, ranchers and cooperatives identify opportunities, build or expand their operations, and create new jobs in rural communities.”

Nonprofit corporations and institutions of higher education have been selected for grants to finance up to 75 percent of the cost of establishing and operating centers for cooperative development.

*In North Dakota, the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, Mandan, was selected to receive \$200,000 to provide technical assistance focusing on sustainable growth in rural areas of North Dakota. Services available include organizational and business development guidance, business development analysis, cooperative development strategies, and assisting in obtaining start-up funds for research and developmental activities.*

Another example is the Northwest Cooperative Development Center in Thurston County, Wash., selected to receive \$200,000 to support emerging industries and promote renewable resource cooperative businesses in rural areas of the Northwest. The funding is expected to retain 18 jobs and create four small producer cooperatives, two rural food cooperatives, and two marketing cooperatives. It also is expected to provide technical assistance to convert two manufactured home parks to a manufactured home park cooperative. This will allow 67 residents to become owners of the land in areas where single family homeownership is not always attainable.

In addition, two new rural cooperative development centers are being established through this round of funding: the Resource Center for Value Added and Alternative Agriculture at North Carolina State University, and the Appalachian Forest Resource Center in Clarke County, Ohio.

USDA Rural Development helps rural residents form new cooperative businesses and improve the operations of existing cooperatives. It provides technical assistance, conducts cooperative-related research, and produces informational materials to promote public understanding of cooperatives.

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Committed to the future of rural communities.

“USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.”

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Funding for individual recipients is contingent upon their meeting the conditions of the grant agreement. The following applicants were selected to receive 2008 Rural Cooperative Development grants:

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund	AL	\$200,000
Winrock International	AR	\$199,920
Arizona State University	AZ	\$199,467
California Center For Cooperative Development	CA	\$200,000
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Educational and Charitable Foundation	CO	\$200,000
Western Illinois University	IL	\$200,000
Indiana Cooperative Development Center, Inc.	IN	\$200,000
Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development	KY	\$200,000
Michigan State University	MI	\$200,000
Northcountry Cooperative Foundation	MN	\$200,000
Mississippi Association of Cooperatives	MS	\$200,000
Board of Regents, University of Nebraska-Lincoln	NE	\$199,961
North Carolina State University	NC	\$200,000
North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives	ND	\$200,000
National Network of Forest Practitioners	OH	\$200,000
Ohio State University Research Foundation	OH	\$200,000
Keystone Development Center, Inc.	PA	\$200,000
South Carolina State University	SC	\$153,782
Value-Added Agriculture Development Center	SD	\$195,000
University of Texas, Pan American	TX	\$198,446
Virginia Foundation for Agriculture, Innovation & Rural Sustainability	VA	\$200,000
Northwest Cooperative Development Center	WA	\$200,000
Cooperative Development Services Fund, Inc.	WI	\$200,000

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has invested more than \$90 billion since 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than 1.7 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.