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**USDA AWARDS \$35 MILLION FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY  
AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECTS**

*Funding will help 639 small businesses and farmers save energy, improve operations*

**BISMARCK, North Dakota, August 27, 2008** —Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer today announced that 639 individuals and businesses in 43 states and the Virgin Islands have been selected to receive \$35 million in grants and loan guarantees for renewable energy systems or to improve energy efficiency in farm and business operations.

“America is a world leader in renewable energy and energy efficiency,” Schafer said. “These projects are good for business, good for the economy, good for jobs, and they help secure more self-sufficient energy resources for our country.”

The grants and loan guarantees are being awarded through USDA Rural Development’s Section 9006 Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements program. The program provides financial assistance to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to support renewable energy projects across a wide range of technologies encompassing biomass (including anaerobic digesters), geothermal, hydrogen, solar and wind energy. It also provides support for energy efficiency improvements, helping recipients reduce energy consumption and improve operations. Of the \$35 million announced today, \$27.5 million are grants and \$7.4 million are guaranteed loans.

**The funding will support a variety of energy-production and energy-saving efforts. For example ,in North Dakota, Chad Brandt of Oakes, N.D., has been selected to receive a \$67,374 combination grant and loan to replace his existing grain dryer with a new, more energy-efficient model that is expected to lower energy costs by more than 20 percent. Riverdale High Lodge LLC, of Riverdale, N.D., has been selected to receive a \$49,163 grant to make energy efficient improvements by replacing the roof, windows, doors, insulation and siding and is expected to reduce energy costs by 85 percent. Osterlund Woodworks Inc. of Garrison, N.D., was selected to receive a \$14,584 grant to purchase and install a more energy-efficient heating and fluorescent lighting system and new insulation, which is expected to reduce energy costs by 61 percent.**

In Monona, Iowa, D.J. Keehner Farms, Inc. has been selected to receive a \$11,561 grant to replace a propane heating system with a more

energy-efficient geothermal heating system, which is expected to reduce energy costs by 78 percent.

A & L Lawson Partnership, in Carencro, La., has been selected for a \$14,980 grant to purchase and install energy-efficient electric motors to replace and power a diesel irrigation well. The project is expected to reduce energy consumption by 48 percent.

Funding of individual recipients is contingent upon their meeting the conditions of the award agreement. For a complete list of recipients go to: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/newsroom/2008/08-27-2008-0996rl.pdf>.

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 Rural Development's website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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