

## **SECRETARY VILSACK ANNOUNCES RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOAN AND GRANT RECIPIENTS**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 30, 2009 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced today that utilities in 13 states have been selected to receive \$18.1 million through USDA Rural Development’s Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program.

“Providing capital to support small business development and improve the quality of health care in rural communities is a key part of USDA Rural Development’s mission,” Vilsack said. “Working with our partners, including utilities, USDA is helping to fund rural infrastructure improvements that will enhance the quality of community life and allow small businesses to compete more effectively.”

Rural Development is awarding \$14.2 million in loans and \$3.9 million in grants to a total of 27 applicants. Funds are allocated to Rural Utilities program borrowers, usually rural telephone or electric cooperatives, which in turn provide loans to local rural businesses and communities. Funding of individual recipients is contingent upon their meeting the conditions of the loan or grant agreement.

The projects are expected to create or save a total of more than 1,800 jobs in Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota and Tennessee.

**For example, in North Dakota, Souris River Telephone Communications, Inc. in Minot, N.D., has been selected to receive a \$300,000 grant to help finance an emergency services facility for the ambulance and fire departments in the community of Mohall.** Se-Ma-No Electric Cooperative in Mansfield, Mo., has been selected to receive a \$740,000 loan to build a rural health clinic and ambulance base in the community of Mountain Grove. The project is expected to create 15 new jobs. The Coastal Electric Cooperative of Midway, Ga., has been selected to receive a \$740,000 loan and a \$300,000 grant to help the McIntosh County Industrial Development Authority finance expansion of a local industrial park. The project is expected to create 183 jobs.

A complete list of loan and grant recipients is available on the USDA Rural Development web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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 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’s web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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