

USDA AWARDS \$271 MILLION IN ELECTRIC LOANS
Funds Will Benefit 56,006 Rural Customers in 15 States

WASHINGTON, March 12, 2009 —Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that 13 rural utilities and cooperatives in 15 states have been selected to receive more than \$271 million in loans to build and repair 4,339 miles of distribution and transmission lines and make system improvements that will benefit 56,006 rural customers.

“President Obama is delivering on his commitment to invest in America’s infrastructure,” Vilsack said. “Our rural communities need reliable, affordable electric service in order to support business expansion and broaden economic opportunities. These loans will spur growth in rural America by enabling cooperatives to deliver improved service to more customers.”

The funding announced today is being provided through USDA Rural Development’s Electric Programs, which Congress authorized under the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 to provide loans and loan guarantees to help utilities, cooperatives, states and local governments provide or improve electric service in rural areas. The Electric Program also helps finance energy conservation and renewable energy systems.

For example, *The Cass County Electric Cooperative, Inc. in Kindred, N.D., has been selected to receive a \$22.5 million loan to build 404 miles of new lines, and make improvement to 210 miles of distribution lines. The improvements will serve 6,100 new and existing customers.*

The Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc. in Sumterville, Fla., has been selected to receive a \$68.5 million loan to build or improve 1,592 miles of distribution and transmission lines and make other system repairs to serve 23,964 new or existing customers.

The Kootenai Electric Cooperative, Inc. in Hayden, Idaho, has been selected to receive a \$51.7 million loan to build and make improvements to 169 miles of distribution and transmission lines and make other system improvements. As a result, service will be provided to 4,747 new and existing customers in Idaho and Washington.

Funding of each loan recipient is contingent upon the recipient meeting the conditions of the loan agreement. Below is a complete list of the selected borrowers.

2009 Electric Loan Recipients

State	Borrower	Loan Amount
FL	Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc.	\$68,500,000
GA	Colquitt Electric Membership Corporation	\$22,500,000
ID, WA	Kootenai Electric Cooperative, Inc.	\$51,720,000
IA	Maquoketa Valley Rural Electric Cooperative	\$9,000,000
KS	Heartland Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.	\$10,600,000
MN, IA	Nobles Cooperative Electric	\$7,957,000
MO	Sac Osage Electric Cooperative, Inc.	\$5,500,000
MS	Central Electric Power Association	\$20,000,000
ND	Cass County Electric Cooperative, Inc.	\$22,500,000
NM, AZ	Columbus Electric Cooperative, Inc.	\$12,866,000
OK	Kiwash Electric Cooperative, Inc.	\$10,800,000
OR	West Oregon Electric Cooperative, Inc.	\$9,490,000
TX	Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association	\$19,673,000

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>.