

Contact:
Dane Henshall (202) 260-0996

USDA ANNOUNCES \$6.45 MILLION IN RURAL GRANTS

Grants Awarded To 39 Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities and Rural Economic Area Partnerships

WASHINGTON, June 23, 2009 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced the selection of recipients for \$6.45 million in grants to spur economic development and revitalization in rural communities.

“The funding announced today will be used for a broad range of economic development and revitalization projects in some of America’s neediest communities,” Vilsack said. “These investments underscore the Obama Administration’s commitment to foster a healthy business climate by helping small and emerging rural enterprises create jobs and economic opportunities.”

For example, Adams County Development Corporation, in rural Hettinger, North Dakota, will receive a \$99,211 grant to help a small emerging business purchase digital equipment for lease to the Hettinger Theatre Foundation, Inc. The project will enable the theatre to keep pace with the film industry and show the current venue of movies in the community. At least seven part-time jobs and one full-time job will be saved.

The Community Learning and Technology Center in Beach, North Dakota, will receive a \$16,000 grant to help small and emerging businesses in a three-county area including Golden Valley and Billings counties in North Dakota and Wibaux County, Montana. Grant funds will be used to purchase new computer equipment which will be used to help support and strengthen basic computer technology skills of local business owners as well as increase technology job skills for the area work force. The goals are to help area businesses develop mechanisms to maintain an economically viable business for the long-term and to increase job skills in the workforce to obtain better-paying jobs and help reduce poverty levels in the area.

The City of Vienna in rural Georgia will receive a \$99,999 grant for rehabilitation and system improvements to three portions of the City’s wastewater infrastructure. According to a 2008 system analysis, 50 percent of the facilities required immediate corrective action. These funds will completely rehabilitate two portions of the infrastructure that provide services to two of the city’s major business areas. Remaining funds will go to improve the wastewater lagoon, which services every business in Vienna. At least ten jobs are expected to be created or saved with these funds.

The Northern Forest Canoe Trail, Inc. in Waitsfield, Vt., has been selected to receive a \$50,000 grant to help small and emerging businesses with three Vermont counties, Franklin, Orleans and Essex. The businesses will use the funds to promote and attract more tourism visitation and coordinate with other recreation and heritage attractions. The

goal is to support small business partners and develop mechanisms for sustaining those partnerships for the long-term. The funding will help six businesses and save 51 jobs.

The applicants were selected to receive funding through the Rural Business Enterprise Grant Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities program and the Rural Economic Area Partnership program. These programs help communities plan and implement economic development projects. The grants to be awarded are part of USDA Rural Development's annual budget and are not funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Funding of each grant recipient is contingent upon the recipient meeting the conditions of the grant agreement.

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>.

These applicants were selected to receive Rural Business Enterprise Grants for Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities and grants for Rural Economic Area Partnerships:

California:

Westside Tule Enterprise Community - \$99,335
Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment (Blythe Village Retail Center) - \$200,000
Redevelopment Agency of Riverside County - \$675,000
Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment (Valley Estrellas Retail Center) - \$200,000
Westside Housing & Economic Network - \$81,930
Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment (Cahuilla Village Retail Center) - \$200,000

Georgia:

Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce, Inc. - \$99,999
City of Vienna - \$99,999

Illinois:

City of Mounds - \$77,185
Shawnee College - \$97,209
Pulaski County Development Association - \$150,000
Shawnee College - \$90,000
Southern Illinois Stimulus Corporation - \$83,640

Kentucky:

Wayne County EZ Industrial Development Authority - \$199,000

Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation - \$299,000

Maine:

Heritage Hall - \$500,000

Museum L-A - \$500,000

Northern Maine Finance Corporation - \$350,000

Town of Frenchville - \$63,224

Town of Limestone - \$112,291

Michigan:

Clare County - \$30,500

Clare County - \$99,500

Middle Michigan Development Corporation - \$55,520

New York:

Sullivan County IDA - \$295,000

Greater Wawarsing Local Development Corporation - \$99,000

North Dakota:

Adams County Development Corporation - \$99,211

Community Learning and Technology Center - \$16,000

Texas:

Maverick County Development Corp. - \$95,000

The Development Corp. of Mercedes - \$500,000

Vermont:

Northeast Kingdom Travel & Tourism Association - \$102,990

Lyndon State College - \$250,000

Northern Community Investment Corporation - \$286,000

Northern Forest Canoe Trail, Inc. - \$50,000

Vermont Community Loan Fund - \$50,000

Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association - \$99,500

Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund - \$45,000

Vermont WoodNet, Inc. - \$12,250

Wisconsin:

Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin - \$29,659

NiiJii Capital Partners, Inc. - \$65,762

#