

DAKOTA MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP RECEIVES USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

“Rural Businesses will receive assistance to increase profits.”

FARGO, October 8, – Rural Development State Director Clare Carlson today presented a ceremonial check for a \$190,000 Rural Business Enterprise Grant to Dakota Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), Inc.



“The Rural Business Enterprise Grant provides an opportunity for up to 12 qualified businesses to receive in-depth technical assistance,” said Clare Carlson, State Director for USDA Rural Development. “The assistance will encompass a wide range of areas including business

plan development, financial resource development, human resource development, product/service development, marketing support, and quality improvements.”

The \$190,000 grant will be used along with \$70,000 from Dakota MEP to provide technical assistance throughout rural areas of North and South Dakota. Dakota MEP, with headquarters in Bismarck, has offices in Fargo, Minot, Watertown, and Sioux Falls. Rural businesses will receive assistance in Lean Enterprise and Kaizen - the continuous improvement system to increase profits through more efficient processes in their businesses.

In Fiscal Year 2008, USDA Rural Development provided **\$38.1 million** in housing programs, **\$54.7 million** in business and community programs, **\$577.5 million** in electric programs, and **\$85.9 million** in telecom programs to North Dakota citizens.

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 \$76.8 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 1.5 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>.