



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
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NATIONAL HOMEOWNERSHIP CELEBRATED ON SPIRIT LAKE RESERVATION

“Rural Development helps families become homeowners”

DEVILS LAKE, June 28, 2004 – June has been declared as National Homeownership Month by President George W. Bush, as announced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In the spirit of homeownership, and in celebration of National Homeownership Month, come the stories of three local homeowners.

“These homeowners, with their hard work and our efforts, together, help President Bush’s Five Star Commitment on increasing minority homeownership throughout the country,” said Clare Carlson, ND Rural Development State Director. “Our congratulations go out to these three homeowners for enduring all challenges and obstacles they faced while achieving the dream of homeownership.”

Sean Gourd, a single father, was living with his parents along with his two young daughters Marissa 17 months and Laila 7 months. Sean always dreamed of providing a place where he and his daughters could call home. After learning about Rural Development from a co-worker, he applied in February 2003 and soon was determined eligible. A lot was located and soon a newly constructed off-site home was in place. As a first-time home buyer, Sean was able to utilize Rural Development’s 502 Direct Program, and through the partnership with Spirit Lake Housing Authority, Sean was able to obtain a grant to cover closing costs. Sean said he couldn’t be happier, and looks forward to living the dream of homeownership for himself and his children.

Arthur Carmona and his wife have five young children ranging from 11 to 4 years of age. The Carmonas have been living in an apartment for several years in the Devils Lake area. We all know the challenges of apartment living where children need to be quiet, no place where to play, and always have to very careful of traffic. The Carmonas always dreamed of having a home of their own and a yard where there children could play and be safe. During an informational meeting sponsored by the Spirit Lake Tribe to its tribal members, Carmona learned about Rural Development’s different housing programs and later contacted Rural Development in May 2003.

Committed to the future of rural communities.

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As a first-time homebuyer he qualified for Rural Development's 502 Direct Loan Program and through the partnership with Spirit Lake Housing Authority and Lewis & Clark Community Works, Arthur was able to obtain a grant to cover the down payment and closing costs. As the funding came together, Arthur decided to purchase a newly manufactured home for his family. Soon the Carmonas will be moving to their new home where their children will be free to run and play without the worries of apartment life.

Jackie Blackbird is a single mother, living on a single mother's income, with a college-age son. The Blackbirds were living in an older trailer that was badly in need of repairs and a real challenge to heat during the winter months. In April 2003, Jackie met with Rural Development to discuss her options in purchasing a home. After being qualified for Rural Development's 502 Direct Loan Program, Jackie began house hunting. She decided on a manufactured home from Greater Dakota Homes of Devils Lake. Jackie believed the turn-key manufactured program was the most affordable and would meet her needs nicely. Through the partnership with Spirit Lake Housing Authority and Lewis & Clark Community Works Jackie was able to obtain a grant to cover the down payment and closing costs. Jackie said that when her new home was delivered she was so happy that she sat down and cried. She said that without the help from Rural Development this would never have happened.

USDA Rural Development serves as the lead federal entity for rural economic and community development needs. Its mission is to deliver programs that will support increased economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. It administers financial and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development and critical community and technology infrastructure. ***Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities.***

In Fiscal Year 2003, USDA Rural Development provided over **\$73.5 million dollars** in loan and grant financing to North Dakota citizens. For more information, please visit our web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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