



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **USDA ANNOUNCES INVESTMENT OF \$11.3 MILLION IN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FOR RURAL AMERICA**

*Funding to Create or Save Over 5,700 Rural Jobs/ 1,700 Rural Business Ventures*

WASHINGTON, Aug. 26, 2004—Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced the selection of 83 applicants in 45 states to receive approximately \$11.3 million in grants for business development and job creation. The funds support President Bush's efforts to create jobs and improve economic opportunities in rural areas.

“Rural business entrepreneurs are the backbone of America's rural economy,” said Veneman. “The funds announced today will further stimulate local economies and help to create and save thousands of jobs.”

Two types of business grants are being awarded through USDA Rural Development to finance or develop small and emerging businesses. They are: [Rural Business Enterprise Grants](#) (RBEG), which can be used for a variety of purposes, including technical assistance, machinery and equipment purchases, revolving loan fund creation, and building construction, and; [Rural Business Opportunity Grants](#) (RBOG), which help sustain economic development in communities with exceptional needs by supporting their economic planning, technical assistance and business training costs.

Veneman said that \$745,575 in RBEG grants will be awarded to the Community Transportation Association of America to assist with providing technical assistance to improve rural passenger transportation systems and facilities in nine states. Additionally, \$1.9 million in RBEG funds will be used to assist public broadcasting networks in Oregon, Maine, Alaska, North Dakota and Vermont with informational programming on rural related issues.

“We are happy for, and proud of the efforts of, these successful grant applicants,” said North Dakota Rural Development State Director, Clare Carlson. “It represents their hard work and the value of USDA Rural Development programs. It also represents the commitment of President George Bush to rural America.”

### **In North Dakota, four recipients received a total of \$608,805. They include:**

**Dakota Heartland Champion Community** was awarded a Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) in the amount of \$14,990. The funds will be used to provide leadership training and skill building to area residents in business and community economic development.

**North Dakota State University (NDSU)** was awarded a Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) in the amount of \$98,175. NDSU will assist in market research, product and service improvement, feasibility studies, prototype and product development, product design, and training to small and emerging private rural businesses.

**Cavalier County Job Development Authority** was awarded a Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) for \$98,000 which will be used to establish a revolving loan fund to assist with business development, retention and expansion in Cavalier County.

**Prairie Public Broadcasting, Inc.** was awarded \$397,640 through the Rural Business Enterprise Grant TV Demonstration. Funding will be used for programming of information important to farmers, ranchers and rural residents which will include three-key components: 1.) "**Market to Market**" - focusing on agricultural and rural issues; 2.) "**Energy - Powering North Dakota's Economy**" - a documentary that will focus on the development of the energy industry and where it is headed; 3.) "**The Bank of North Dakota**" - a 30 minute program reviewing the bank's key role in financing the state's economic future.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and 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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