

USDA/Rural Development

Bismarck, North Dakota

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jane F. Grant (800) 582-7584
Public Information Coordinator
jane.grant@nd.usda.gov

VENEMAN ANNOUNCES \$6.3 MILLION IN RURAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS TO FOSTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN 20 STATES

WASHINGTON, Sept. 16, 2003 – Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced today \$6.3 million in economic development grants in 20 states.

“The Bush Administration is committed to enhancing job opportunities in America’s rural economies,” said Veneman. “These grants will strengthen rural community cooperatives, which will facilitate the retention of jobs in rural areas.”

The [cooperative development grant](#) program is administered through USDA Rural Development. The grants were awarded on a competitive basis and are intended to foster rural cooperative development through projects that provide rural residents with education and technical assistance in areas of cooperative startup, marketing and managing, and other self-help tools.

Recipient states and the grant amounts are the following:

Alabama - \$321,104	Arkansas - \$325,253	California - \$327,748
Colorado - \$324,500	Iowa - \$272,382	Illinois - \$209,992
Indiana - \$175,000	Kentucky - \$314,575	Massachusetts - \$324,811
Minnesota - \$347,372	Missouri - \$624,400	Mississippi - \$324,240
Montana - \$186,015	North Dakota - \$325,000	Nebraska - \$328,826
Ohio - \$346,258	Texas - \$294,260	Virginia - \$349,800
	Washington - \$285,282	Wisconsin - \$325,000

In North Dakota, the Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) for \$325,000 was awarded to the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives. The funds will be used to provide technical assistance to individuals, cooperatives, small businesses, and other similar entities to improve the economic conditions of rural areas through cooperative development.

"Cooperatives are a vital key to North Dakota's economy," said North Dakota Rural Development State Director Clare Carlson. "Through its technical assistance, this grant will provide rural communities the opportunity to build stronger communities and enhance the quality of life for all rural Americans."

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 www.rurdev.usda.gov.

#

USDA Rural Development is an Equal Opportunity Lender, Provider, and Employer. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to: USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410