



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development  
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## USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS \$69,000 GRANT TO CASS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

**Fort Ransom, April 27, 2004.** . . During a kick off ceremony, today, of "Severe Weather Awareness Week," April 26-30, a ceremonial check for \$69,000 was presented by Clare Carlson, state director of USDA Rural Development, to Cass County Electric Cooperative. Funds are made available through Rural Development's Rural Utility Program and are used to install a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Radio System (NOAA).

"Each year, thousands of people die or lose property because they did not know soon enough about hazards, disasters, or emergencies," said Carlson. "NOAA Weather Radio operates an all hazard early warning system that alerts people, in areas covered by its transmissions, of approaching dangerous weather and other emergencies. The system covers all major metropolitan areas and many smaller cities and towns, but many rural areas do not have NOAA Weather Radio coverage. This will fix that for this area."

The NOAA Weather Radio System includes a 1000-watt dual weather radio transmitter, antenna, and backup generator at Fort Ransom, Ransom County, North Dakota. In addition, Cass County Electric Cooperative provides the electricity and the tower facilities for this system. Residents in Ransom and Sargent counties and parts of Richland, Cass, Barnes, LaMoure and Dickey counties will receive this live 24-hour source of weather forecasts and warnings by tuning to 162.525 MHZ, and channel six.

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As of April 15, 2004, the Rural Utility Program has awarded \$4,987,431 from its Weather Radio Transmitter Grant Program to extend the coverage of the NOAA Weather Radio System in rural America. These 79 grants, covering 87 sites in 24 states and Puerto Rico, were awarded to 14 electric cooperatives and nonprofits, four telecommunications cooperatives, and 61 local and state governments. To date, North Dakota received a total of six grants.

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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