



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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**USDA ASSISTS IN NEW HOME FOR
EAST-CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Lincoln, Neb., May 23, 2003--The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development awarded this month, \$310,000 in loan funds to the East-Central District Health Department for the purchase and renovation of a facility to house the health department's expanded staff and services. East-Central District Health Department will provide \$46,000 to cover the cost of equipment and a portion of the renovation costs. The facility will primarily serve the 50,000 households in Platte, Colfax, Boone and Nance counties.

"The services provided by East-Central are essential to protecting and promoting health and in preventing disease and injury," stated Janice Stopak, rural development specialist for USDA Rural Development. "The facility will be serving areas which have been identified as medically underserved and with a shortage of medical professionals."

East-Central District Health Department primarily provides services to low-income and disadvantaged individuals. Currently, East-Central operates out of two locations. The original facility was set up to provide health care and related social services to a 2 county area with a staff of 12 employees. East-Central began utilizing a second facility to accommodate their present 4 county service area, 33 employees and an approximately 25,000 annual patient caseload. With the number of patients projected to increase with the addition of the community health center, added dental services, and expansion of service hours for primary care and behavioral services, East-Central was faced with seeking a larger facility to accommodate their growing needs.

The acquired facility located at 2282 East 32nd Avenue in Columbus will allow East-Central to serve more patients and will provide adequate space for doctors and nurses to perform their duties. With lot space available, there is potential to meet any future needs for expansion. East-Central provides both health and related social services through a public health clinic, maternal child health program, Woman, Infants and Children (WIC) program, tobacco reduction program, along with mental health and reproductive health services. The new facility will assist East-Central to centralize their services in one location and will provide for a conducive working environment.

The USDA loan funds were provided through the USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Direct Loan program and will be repaid over 40 years at an interest rate of 4.50 percent. For additional information contact Janice Stopak at 6030 S. 58th Street Suite B Lincoln, Neb. 68516 or phone (402) 423-9683, (402) 437-5093 (TDY).

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