



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • 1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250-1300 • Voice: (202) 720-4623 • Email: [oc.news@usda.gov](mailto:oc.news@usda.gov) • Web: <http://www.usda.gov>

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Ed Loyd (202) 720-4623  
Tim McNeilly (202) 690-0498  
Karissa Hagedorn (402) 437-5735

**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. 27, 2004—Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman 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 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.

Nebraska received a total of over \$160,000 awarded to three grant recipients for the following projects:

- Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District (NENEDD), Norfolk will utilize \$62,000 in RBEG funds allowing for two full time staff to provide technical assistance to small and emerging businesses. This staff is needed as NENEDD expands its services to the southern tier of the District. NENEDD serves 16 counties in northeast Nebraska. This project is anticipated to create 15 jobs, save 5 and to assist at least 6 businesses.

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- Central Nebraska Economic Development District, Bassett received RBEG funds of \$50,000 that will provide economic development, planning and technical assistance to businesses and communities by bringing them online through Location One Information System and the Nebraska Economic Development Information Online System. These systems will help market central Nebraska. The District serves a 15 county area of central Nebraska. This project is anticipated to create and/or save 15 jobs and to assist at least 5 businesses.
- Southeast Nebraska Development District (SENDDD), Lincoln is the recipient of \$49,000 in RBOG funds that will provide for a Regional Economic Development Strategy, a local planning process, designed to guide the economic growth of nine rural counties in the southeast corner of Nebraska. SENDDD serves a 17 county area in southeast Nebraska.

Funding of selected applicants will be contingent upon meeting the conditions of the grant agreement. A list of the individual awards can be found at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/newsroom/news.htm>.

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>.

In Nebraska contact the USDA Rural Development State Office at 402-437-5735, Rm. 152 Federal Building 100 Centennial Mall North Lincoln, NE 68508. Visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne>.

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