



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA ANNOUNCES \$6.8 MILLION TO SPUR RURAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN 18 STATES

WASHINGTON, March 11, 2004—Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced more than \$6.8 million in technical assistance grants to 27 nonprofit community-based development organizations, low-income communities or Federally recognized tribes to improve their ability to develop rural housing, technology, economic development and community facilities in 18 states.

“The Bush Administration is committed to the strengthening of rural communities,” said Veneman. “These grant funds support rural community programs to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for their local residents.”

The technical assistance grant program was created by Congress in 2000, to assist in the development or increase the capacity of nonprofit organizations, low-income rural communities or Federally recognized tribes to undertake projects in the areas of housing, community facilities and community and economic development in rural areas.

Ho-Chunk Inc. of Winnebago, Neb., the grantee of a \$152,195 grant will utilize the monies to increase Ho Chunk Community Development Corporation’s (recipient) organizational capacity through the hiring of a Community Project Manager. The Manager will provide coordinated and comprehensive community development planning and project development for the Winnebago Tribe and its Departments and for the Social Services offered to the Winnebago residents. The grant funds shall also expand the capacity of the Technology Manager to include the offering of technology training courses and the purchase of technology lab equipment. A welcomed solution to tribal communities who are in great need to increase their information technology systems for business development.

In Maine, Coastal Enterprises, Inc. will use \$298,784 in grant funds to provide technical and financial assistance for programs that support housing, small business development and a small business revolving loan fund. In the Northwest, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians will receive \$400,000 to assist 10 tribes with the ability to address technology and telecommunications needs that will allow them to advance their economic and community development interest. In addition to the funding announced today, the Bush Administration has provided nearly \$12 million to support community and economic development efforts in 21 states.

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Recipients are required to obtain matching funds that will double the impact of the USDA grants. Funding of individual recipients will be contingent upon meeting the conditions of the grant agreement. A complete list of 2004 recipients 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 Denise Brosius-Meeks at 402-437-5559, denise.meeks@ne.usda.gov. Write USDA Rural Development Attn: Denise Meeks Rm. 152 Federal Building 100 Centennial Mall North Lincoln, Neb. 68508-3888. Visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne>.

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