



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Builds on Home Ownership Month

WASHINGTON, June 1, 2007 – Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas Dorr today highlighted June 2007 as National Homeownership Month, with a series of events sponsored by USDA Rural Development.

“For nearly 60 years, USDA Rural Development has helped rural Americans with the blueprint to become a homeowner,” Dorr said. “In the most recent year, we helped 43,000 rural families achieve the American dream of homeownership.”

This year’s Homeownership Month highlights the close partnership of USDA Rural Development with partner organizations through financial and technical assistance by direct and guaranteed loan programs. Volunteers in the Mutual Self-Help housing program are also recognized for helping future homeowners build their own houses under the direction of an experienced construction supervisor. Through community building events, almost 1,500 families built their own homes last year, earning 25 percent credit through “sweat equity.”

USDA is hosting more than 100 events nationwide during June to underscore the Administration’s commitment to providing Americans with safe, affordable housing. Ohio’s events include:

- June 21, 2007 - Continuing education classes for realtors and nonprofits and a home ownership fair in Findlay, Ohio;
- June 26, 2007 - Recognition of the 168th Mutual Self-Help home built for Rural Development by a Washington Court House, Ohio community action organization working with the state Rural Development office for affordable housing options.

USDA Rural Development’s mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has invested more than \$76.8 billion since 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than 1.5 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. 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>.

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