



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Rural Development Funds \$5 Million Business Expansion

COLUMBUS, OHIO, Mar. 16, 2007 – Randall Hunt, state director for USDA Rural Development announced today approval of a \$5 million financing package to Willoway Nurseries, Inc. of Avon, Ohio. Willoway Nurseries will use the funding to expand and improve its operations.

“Rural Development’s Business and Cooperatives Program provides another tool for business owners to access capital to help improve their business operations,” said Hunt. “We invested more than \$28 million throughout Ohio last year to help strengthen the business climate in our rural communities.”

Willoway Nurseries, Inc. was established in 1954 and is one of the largest wholesale growers of quality nursery stock in Ohio. They are ranked among the top 40 nurseries nationally and employ 170 full time and 300 seasonal staff members.

The goal of Rural Development’s Business and Cooperative Program is to promote a dynamic business climate in rural America through the creation or preservation of jobs while encouraging a clean rural environment. Participants in the program may include individuals, corporations, partnerships, cooperatives, public bodies, nonprofit corporations, Indian tribes, and private companies.

“With the support of our bank, AG Credit and the USDA Rural Development, we were able to fund our greenhouse modernization project,” said President / CEO of Willoway Nurseries, Tom Demaline. “The project fulfills our goal of creating a state-of-the-art facility that will help set the course for the growth of Willoway and our employees”. “The installation of the Biomass boiler and the use of a renewable energy source affirm our commitment to sustainability and the importance of reducing our dependency on fossil fuels.”

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. Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure.

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Committed to the future of rural communities.

“USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.”

To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD).

Further information on rural programs is available by calling 614-255-2400, visiting a local USDA Rural Development office or by viewing USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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(Left to right) USDA Rural Development Administrator for Business and Cooperative Programs Jackie Gleason joins Willoway Nurseries Vice President Cathy Kowalczyk, Willoway President Tom Demaline, Ag Credit Board of Directors Hal Dalton, Ag Credit President Neil Jordan and Rural Development State Director Randy Hunt in celebrating the award of a \$5 million financing package. The funding, from Rural Development's Renewable Energy Program, will help Willoway Nurseries expand their operations and improve operating efficiency.