



United States Department of Agriculture  
Rural Development  
VERMONT/NEW HAMPSHIRE

## **Rural Development Looking to Invest in Bennington and Rutland Counties**

By Anita Rios Moore, Public Affairs Specialist, USDA Rural Development

USDA Rural Development, an Agency whose mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in rural America, is entering its 2009 fiscal year ready to assist community organizations and businesses with their financial resource needs.

Equipped with over 40 Business, Community and Housing Loan, Grant and Loan Guarantee Programs, the Rural Development staff in Brattleboro, servicing the Southern Vermont counties of Bennington, Rutland, Windham and Windsor counties, is gearing up to provide RD technical assistance and financing throughout these counties. Historically, Windham and Windsor county organizations and municipalities have actively applied and received Rural Development assistance, receiving almost \$6.2 million last fiscal year. Conversely, RD investments in Rutland and Bennington counties have been far less, with just over \$600,000 invested in the two counties. Rural Development is eager to better connect its resources to the community and economic development needs in these counties. To do this, a series of workshops are planned throughout Vermont, including

two workshops in Bennington and Rutland counties.

The workshops will focus on USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities (CF) Direct Loan and Grant Programs, offering interested organizations and municipalities, tools and resources needed for submitting a successful loan or grant application. This program has helped a number of organizations meet their financial goals in order to provide a service to their community. For example, Castleton Community Seniors, Inc., plans to use their 2008 CF loan of \$100,000 to renovate an existing historic barn structure that will allow them to dedicate space for health and fitness classes, prevention care programs, workshops, and lectures that focus on adult health care. Bennington Project Independence will use their 2008 CF grant of \$22,000 to purchase equipment and furnishings for their new adult day care facility.

"Since 2004, USDA Rural Development has strived to make the name Rural Development known as the federal agency that connects community needs to funding resources." said Jon-Michael Muise, Brattleboro Area Director. "We are a catalyst for coordinating the technical and financial assistance needed to support project development, and in many cases RD is the sole or one of the multiple funders. We know there is a critical need for the funding resources we have to offer and hope to reach the organizations in our

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service area with these workshops and partnerships.”

Workshop dates are:

12/2/08 – Beginning at 10:30AM to 12:30 PM at the Bennington Free Library;

12/2/08 – Starting at 2PM to 4PM at the USDA Service Center, 170 South Main Street at Trolley Square, Rutland, VT.

12/3/08 – Starting at 10AM at the USDA Service Center, Farm Vu Drive, White River Junction, VT, and

12/8/08 – Beginning at 1PM to 3PM at the Marlboro College Technology Center, 142 Vernon Street-Rm 2 East, Brattleboro, VT.

Organizations interested in finding out more about USDA Rural Development’s programs and the upcoming workshops should contact Lorie Gauthier, 802-257-7878, ext. 111 or email at [lorie.gauthier@vt.usda.gov](mailto:lorie.gauthier@vt.usda.gov).

USDA Rural Development’s mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in Rural America. This is done by providing financial and technical assistance to foster growth and new opportunities for business development, home ownership, and critical community and technology infrastructure. To learn more about USDA Rural Development programs visit the web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/vt>.

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