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# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development  
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## **RURAL NEW HAMPSHIRE HAS GREATER OPPORTUNITIES DUE TO USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT OF \$109 MILLION IN NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Montpelier, VT, December 30, 2008 Jolinda H. LaClair, State Director of USDA Rural Development (RD) for New Hampshire, announced that during Fiscal Year 2008, USDA Rural Development helped to improve the quality of life and increase economic opportunity with an investment of \$109,169,783 into New Hampshire. "We are proud to have provided technical and financial resources to assist individuals, organizations and community leaders in, rural New Hampshire, to strengthen their communities." said LaClair. "As the economy fluctuates, USDA Rural Development's programs will continue to provide financing needed to reduce energy costs and consumption, create new jobs, increase and sustain homeownership and strengthen community infrastructure."

One investment at a time, lenders brought the benefits of a USDA RD loan guarantee home to New Hampshire, helping rural small businesses to start or expand their already existing businesses, including two loan guarantees to First Pioneer Farm Credit allowing them to finance Van Guard Stables' purchase of property, equine training and boarding business. Mount Washington Valley Economic Council, Southeast Economic Development Corporation and Northern Community Investment Corporation will use their portion of the \$1,750,000 RD Intermediary Relending Program loans to establish or recapitalize a revolving loan program to provide low-interest loans to businesses and non-profit community development organizations located in their regions, helping to save and create jobs throughout rural New Hampshire. RD's Business Program grants, loans and loan guarantees investment of \$7.3 million during 2008 helped to create and save over 690 jobs by assisting 119 businesses.

RD's Rural Energy for America Program is gradually becoming a valuable resource for small businesses and agricultural producers in rural New Hampshire. Over \$1 million in grants and loan guarantees will help New Hampshire agricultural producers and rural small businesses reduce energy costs and consumption through the purchase of renewable energy systems and installation of energy efficiency improvements. RD is pleased to be a part of the Pleasant View Gardens' energy efficiency project. Funding from an RD energy grant and a loan guarantee with First Pioneer Farm Credit enabled Pleasant View Gardens to install a wood fired boiler system at their North Pembroke Road facility, reducing their heating costs substantially. RD continues to support the New Hampshire agricultural community with funding from the Rural Energy for America Program. Many maple producers are using RD energy grant funds to finance the purchase and installation of energy efficiency equipment to reduce their production costs, including two of the five grants received in NH.

Rural Development invested over \$4.6 million in Community Facility (CF) Grants, Loans and Loan Guarantees to assist communities with financing essential community services such as the Upper Valley Teacher Institute which will use a CF Direct Loan to purchase and renovate an existing building for their teacher training programs.

Rural New Hampshire organizations and municipalities receiving Community Facility Program funds will build new town buildings, larger health centers and homeless shelters, make accessibility modifications, purchase emergency equipment, library furniture and workstations, and upgrade playgrounds. This year RD Community Facility Grants were used by three town libraries in Canaan, Charlestown, and Colebrook to help purchase furniture, computer workstations and to make major renovations such as accessibility and energy efficiency improvements.

RD continues to play a crucial role in helping rural communities connect to the electrical, telephone, water and waste disposal services necessary for growth and sustainability. RD invested over \$30 million in Water & Environmental Programs, Solid Waste Management, Distance Learning, Rural Community Development Initiative, Broadband, and Community Connect loans and grants throughout rural New Hampshire. In May 2008, RD and the Town of Jaffrey celebrated Earth Day with the announcement of the \$7,278,000 Water Environmental Program (WEP) loan and a \$2,425,000 WEP Program grant to make wastewater treatment facilities improvements. RD is pleased to play a part in bringing the internet to rural New Hampshire with two Community Connect grants which are used to establish broadband services to residents, businesses and critical community facilities and for community centers that provide free broadband access to community residents. Northern Community Investment Corporation and White Mountain Cablevision will use their grants to expand internet services to NH North Country residents.

The White Mountains Regional School District is using their \$323,022 Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant to place state of the IP-based video conference equipment at their Essex location and Spere Memorial Hospital will use their \$88,602 DLT grant and \$797,421 DLT loan for electronic medical records and home telemonitoring.

‘Own Your Future’ - 2008 June Homeownership Month theme was observed by RD with homeownership celebrations across the state. More than \$57.7 million in loans and grants helped to purchase, repair and construct housing for 509 homeowners and individuals throughout rural New Hampshire. Partnering with mortgage lenders in New Hampshire, RD saw one of its most successful mortgage lending years. Merrimack Mortgage Co. helped 54 families and individuals to become homeowners with USDA RD’s mortgage loan guarantees. Additional home repairs will be made with \$100,000 in Housing Preservation Grants (HPG). These grant funds are leveraged with private sector dollars to repair existing homes owned by low-income individuals or families.

Residents of RD funded rental properties received \$8.7 million in rental assistance, provided to ensure that rents are no more than 30% of a resident’s income

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>.