



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA APPROVES \$16.5 MILLION FOR ECONOMICALLY TROUBLED RURAL COMMUNITIES

WASHINGTON, Aug. 6, 2002— Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced today the selection of over 150 projects in economically distressed communities in 26 states and U.S. Territories to receive \$16.5 million in Community Facilities Economic Impact Initiative Grants. The grants will assist in the development of important community services and facilities in areas of high unemployment and economic depression.

“Rural areas across the country will benefit from these grants which will be used for medical, educational, fire fighting, maintenance and child care facilities,” said Veneman. “This Administration continues its efforts to strengthen rural communities through programs such as the ones being announced today.”

The grants are made available through a special initiative under the Community Facilities program of USDA Rural Development. The projects must be essential community facilities and services for public use in rural communities with populations of less than 20,000 that have a not employed rate of at least 19 percent. The grants provide facilities for community health care, cultural and educational activities, fire, rescue and public safety and public building and improvement.

For example, Iron County Ambulance District in Missouri was selected to receive a grant to purchase an ambulance and lifesaving equipment. The county, part of the Lower Mississippi Delta Region, has a high unemployment rate and is medically under-served. The new ambulance and lifesaving equipment will serve 2,962 households and will significantly improve emergency medical services in the area.

Selected states and grant totals include:

Alaska - \$8,197,500	Minnesota - \$100,000	South Dakota - \$481,284
Arizona - \$499,775	Mississippi - \$485,580	Texas - \$422,500
Arkansas - \$273,205	Missouri - \$553,460	Utah - \$195,100
California - \$370,313	Montana - \$270,050	Vermont - \$177,750
Idaho - \$240,108	New Jersey - \$268,500	Virginia - \$530,000
Illinois - \$300,600	New Mexico - \$463,910	Western Pacific Trust
Iowa - \$786,125	North Dakota - \$204,560	Territory - \$42,510
Kentucky - \$200,000	Oregon - \$325,000	West Virginia - \$123,715
Louisiana - \$653,500	Puerto Rico - \$200,000	

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A complete list of the selected individual grant recipients and projects can be found at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/newsroom/news.htm>:

Grant funds are available to eligible public entities, nonprofit corporations, special purpose districts and tribal governments. Communities having the lowest populations and lowest median incomes were given selection priority. The project's economic feasibility and the financial status of the applicant were also considered.

USDA Rural Development serves as the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers financial and technical assistance through three agencies: Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service and Rural Utilities Service. Further information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by contacting any USDA Service Center or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/>

COMMUNITY FACILITIES ECONOMIC IMPACT INITIATIVE GRANTS

ALASKA - \$8,197,500

SE AK Regional Health Consortium - \$697,500 - Purpose: To complete construction of a sub-regional health clinic in the community of Angoon.

DCED, Regulatory Commission of Alaska - \$7,500,000 - Purpose: Telecommunication development to provide high speed internet access for rural police, fire departments and local hospitals.

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