

## FAS and NRECA International Ltd. Help Create Economic Opportunity in Developing Countries through Rural Electrification Initiatives

The NRECA (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association) International, Ltd. honored USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) with a plaque for its help to electrify developing countries in Latin America and Asia. The plaque was presented to W. Kirk Miller, FAS' General Sales Manager, Anaheim, California, at meeting on February 26, 2008, in NRECA's 66<sup>th</sup> annual

The plaque reads, "***In continuing leadership and electric cooperative worldwide, the Board of International Ltd. Agricultural Service of the Agriculture as a true and American community of cooperatives. Presented meeting of NRECA,***



***appreciation of the support in the cause of development Directors of NRECA recognizes the Foreign U.S. Department of faithful partner of the rural electric during the 66<sup>th</sup> annual February 26, 2008.***

Over the past nine years, agricultural commodities to NRECA through two food assistance programs to encourage economic and agricultural reforms in developing countries that foster free enterprise or enhance other U.S. assistance efforts. NRECA sold the agricultural commodities and used the funds generated to improve and expand electric distribution systems in Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and the Philippines.

USDA has donated U.S.

For example, in 1999 and 2000, USDA donated agricultural commodities valued at more than \$4 million to NRECA through the Section 416(b) and Food for Progress programs for use in Guatemala. By monetizing the surplus commodities provided, NRECA generated funds to finance a sustainable system of rural electrification, extend and improve electrical lines, and wire homes and small businesses. These activities benefited a total of 25,000 Guatemalans either directly or indirectly.

NRECA also received Food for Progress funding in 2002 and 2006 for rural electrification efforts in the Dominican Republic. NRECA monetized donated U.S. agricultural commodities valued at more than \$16 million to provide grants and loans for financing rural electrification expansion and rehabilitation projects and provided loans to promote rural development through electric services to small industries. Current projects include improving and extending the electric system in several rural areas of the country; training to ensure the sustainability of the electric service; and creating an agricultural lending program to finance the costs of electric system connections for farms and purchase of income-generating equipment. These projects helped more than 12,000 people.

USDA has also provided Food for Progress funding to NRECA for rural electrification projects in Bolivia in 2003 and the Philippines in 2001. The Bolivia project will benefit 4,000 rural households, clinics, schools, and businesses in 80 villages of Bolivia's Yungas Valley. The Philippines project has been highly successful, establishing 120 electric co-ops that are providing as many as 5-million people with electricity every day.

By joining forces, NRECA and FAS were able to support economic development in recipient countries and bolster fragile states.

For more information about NRECA, go to [www.nrecainternational.coop](http://www.nrecainternational.coop)