



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA AWARDS \$4.5 MILLION FOR 23 RURAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

EPES, Alabama, August 15, 2008 – Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer today announced that more than \$4.5 million in grants will go to 23 Rural Cooperative Development Centers to improve rural economic conditions throughout 22 states. Schafer announced the multi-million dollar funding investment during remarks at the 41st annual meeting of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund.

“Rural Cooperative Development Centers work closely to mentor entrepreneurs and grow local business with technical advice and research,” said Schafer. “This hometown support, close at hand, strengthens jobs and opportunities throughout rural communities.”

The 23 nonprofit groups and institutions of higher education selected today may receive grants to finance up to 75 percent of the cost to establish and operate centers for cooperative development.

For example, with a \$200,000 grant, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund will fund the Cooperative Development, Training and Research Center in Sumter County, Ala. This grant is expected to create and save more than 400 jobs, including those for 250 family farmers and 100 fishermen.

In addition, two new rural cooperative development centers will be established with the funds announced by Schafer: the Resource Center for Value Added and Alternative Agriculture at North Carolina State University, and the Appalachian Forest Resource Center in Clarke County, Ohio.

USDA Rural Development helps rural residents form cooperative businesses and improve the operations of existing cooperatives. It provides technical assistance, conducts cooperative-related research, and produces informational materials to promote public understanding of cooperatives.

Funding for individual recipients is contingent upon their meeting the conditions of the grant agreement. The following applicants were selected to receive 2008 Rural Cooperative Development grants:

Recipient	State	Grant Amount
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund	AL	\$200,000
Winrock International	AR	\$199,920
Arizona State University	AZ	\$199,467
California Center For Cooperative Development	CA	\$200,000
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Educational and Charitable Foundation	CO	\$200,000
Western Illinois University	IL	\$200,000
Indiana Cooperative Development Center, Inc.	IN	\$200,000
Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development	KY	\$200,000
Michigan State University	MI	\$200,000
Northcountry Cooperative Foundation	MN	\$200,000
Mississippi Association of Cooperatives	MS	\$200,000
Board of Regents, University of Nebraska-Lincoln	NE	\$199,961
North Carolina State University	NC	\$200,000
North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives	ND	\$200,000
National Network of Forest Practitioners	OH	\$200,000
Ohio State University Research Foundation	OH	\$200,000
Keystone Development Center, Inc.	PA	\$200,000
South Carolina State University	SC	\$153,782
Value-Added Agriculture Development Center	SD	\$195,000
University of Texas-Pan American	TX	\$198,446
Virginia Foundation for Agriculture, Innovation & Rural Sustainability	VA	\$200,000
Northwest Cooperative Development Center	WA	\$200,000
Cooperative Development Services Fund, Inc.	WI	\$200,000

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has invested more than \$90 billion since 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than 1.7 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA Rural Development's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.