



NEWS RELEASE

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SCHAFFER ANNOUNCES \$547 MILLION FOR 232 RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS *USDA Investments To Fund Projects in Towns Nationwide*

TUSCALOOSA, Alabama, August 15, 2008 — Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer today announced the investment of \$547 million in loans and grants to provide safe drinking water and improved wastewater treatment systems for rural towns and communities.

“A majority of this investment in rural infrastructure systems is the result of USDA moving the 2008 farm bill funding out to communities in a timely manner,” Schafer said during a visit to the USDA Service Center here today. “Having safe and reliable water and sewer services is vital to the health of rural communities.”

For example, in west Alabama, the Sumter County Sewer Authority will receive more than \$2.9 million to construct a sewer system for the towns of Gainesville, Emelle and Geiger. In the city of Port St. Joe, Fla., \$8.6 million will bring the city’s wastewater treatment plant into compliance with state environmental regulations. In the rural community of Taylorsville, Ind., the Eastern Bartholomew Water Corporation will receive \$4.8 million to upgrade the water transmission main for 5,377 customers.

Loans and grants are being awarded to rural communities in 46 states and Puerto Rico through USDA Rural Development’s Water and Environmental Program. The 2008 farm bill, also known as the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, provides \$357 million to local communities for water and wastewater projects. Another \$190 million is being distributed as part of the 2008 budget.

Funding of each project is contingent upon the recipient meeting the requirements of the loan or grant agreement. For a complete list of recipients, go to:
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/newsroom/2008/FBWWFR-List.pdf>.

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>.