



# Quarterly Review

## USDA Rural Development Acting Under Secretary Visits Wisconsin

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Acting Under Secretary Gilbert Gonzalez was in Seymour, Wisconsin at the Wisconsin Dairy Graziers Cooperative on Friday, October 15th to announce the awarding of more than \$337 thousand in Value-Added Producer Grants to four Wisconsin recipients. Grant funds will be used to help farmers and ranchers increase their economic opportunities through the development of new products and markets for agriculturally based products.

“These grants are critical to assisting America’s farmers and ranchers increase markets for their commodities and to increase their profitability,” said Gonzalez. “President Bush is committed to helping more rural families live the American Dream through the creation of new business ventures that employ more rural Americans. This program is a significant investment in the future of rural families and communities.”

Agriculture Acting Under Secretary Gonzalez and Rural Development Wisconsin State Director Frank Frassetto presented the Wisconsin Dairy Graziers Cooperative, one of the four grant recipients, with a large check representing the \$38,540 grant that they were recently

awarded. Wisconsin Dairy Graziers Cooperative will use the grant funds for working capital expenses for marketing cold pack cheese products they produce.

The other recipients include: Timber Producers Association of Michigan and Wisconsin, located in Rhinelander, WI, who received a \$120,627 grant to evaluate the feasibility of marketing bio based consumer chemicals, bio-based industrial chemicals and bio-based fuels made from slash and low-value pulpwood. CC’s Jersey Crème, Ltd., located in Spring Valley, WI, who received a \$28,700 grant for working capital expenses to market seven new yogurt products. Burnett Dairy Cooperative, located in Grantsburg, WI, who received a \$150,000 grant which will be used towards working capital expenses for marketing deli cheese and individually packaged string cheese products.

“These projects will bring new opportunities by creating value-added agricultural products that will provide a real investment in their businesses and communities as well as forge new solutions in developing alternative energy sources,” said Frassetto. “The Bush Administration continues to push for increased investment in value-added processing and agri-marketing ventures providing renewed growth to these important sectors of our economy.”

After the check presentation and announcement ceremony, Acting Under Secretary Gonzalez and State Director Frassetto traveled to Friesland, WI to acknowledge the achievements of the United Wisconsin Grain Producers, LLC. (UWGP), who received a \$450,000 Value-Added Development Grant in 2003. UWGP is using the federal funds for the construction and start-up of a new corn ethanol production plant. Acting Under Secretary Gonzalez, a long with State Director Frassetto, UWGP Board

Members, and other local and state officials toured the construction site of the corn ethanol facility.

Rural Development Value-Added Producer Grants are designed to help farmers and/or ranchers increase their economic opportunities through the development of new products and markets for agriculturally based products. Authorized as a part of the 2002 Farm Bill, the Value-Added Producer Grants also provide an opportunity to refine agricultural commodities and products to increase their value in the global market place as well as bring new opportunities for developing alternative energy sources.



Rural Development Acting Under Secretary Gonzalez taking a walking tour of the United Wisconsin Grain Producers Ethanol Plant in Friesland, WI.



Rural Development Acting Under Secretary Gonzalez presents representatives from Dairy Graziers Cooperative with a check representing the \$38,540 recently awarded Value-Added Producer Grant

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# Rural Utilities Program Administrator Announces the Awarding of \$6.1 Million in Grant to the State of Wisconsin

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Administrator for Rural Utilities Programs, Hilda Legg, came to Madison, WI on September 21, 2004 to announce the awarding of more than \$6.1 million in Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Grants to 27 recipients here in Wisconsin. Of the 27 recipients, 25 were awarded funding for the development of renewable energy systems and 2 recipients received grants for energy efficiency improvements to their operations.

“The Bush Administration has emphasized the importance of bringing greater independence to our country through expanded use of renewable energy and energy efficiency systems.

These grants will help farmers and rural businesses meet this need not only here in Wisconsin, but through out rural America,” said Frank Frassetto USDA Rural Development Wisconsin State Director. “Rural Development is proud to have a role in enabling

our citizens, farmers and rural businesses in developing these energy systems and making these energy improvements to their operations. This investment will pay off in greater opportunities and in a better future for generations to come.”

The Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements program was created as a part of the 2002 Farm Bill to assist farmers, ranchers, and rural businesses develop renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements to their operations. In 2003, the Bush Administration invested \$21.7 million to assist 114 applicants from 24 states develop or improve wind power, anaerobic digester, solar, ethanol and bioenergy related systems or efficiency upgrades. This year the Bush Administration invested a total of \$22.8 million to assist 167 recipients in 26 states.

Recipients for the Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Program must be agricultural producers or rural small businesses. Rural Development grant funds may be

used for projects that derive energy from a wind, solar, biomass or geothermal source, or hydrogen derived from biomass, or water using wind, solar or geothermal energy sources. The design and implementation of the grant program was accomplished through the consultation with several federal departments, most notably the US Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency.



RUP Administrator, Hilda Legg



Rural Utilities Program Administrator, Hilda Legg and Rural Development State Director Frank Frassetto present a check representing the \$6.1 million in grants to Wisconsin recipients

## Day of Care held in Honor of the New Transitional Housing Shelter in Black River Falls

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development and the Bolton Refuge House, Inc. joined numerous volunteers for a Day of Care celebration on September 17, 2004 in honor of the new transitional home in Black River Falls, Wisconsin. The event kicked off with the official lease signing between Bolton Refuge Housing, Inc. and USDA Rural Development Wisconsin State Director, Frank Frassetto, to use the Rural Development inventory house as a shelter for homeless families.

This is the first time in the State of Wisconsin that USDA Rural Development has entered into a partnership of this kind. This Rural Development program allows the use of their non-program inventory homes to be leased out to non-profit organizations for \$1.00 per year for up to ten years. The non-profit agency must agree to use the home for transitional housing needs and to be responsible for the maintenance and other associated costs.

“This is exactly the kind of out of the box thinking we need to be doing in Wisconsin,” said Frassetto. “I am so pleased that we have been able to bring all the players together in this important endeavor. Furthermore, this is a best practice that will be employed where possible in other areas of the state.”

Bolton Refuge House, Inc. first became aware of the Rural Development program through Continuum Care Meeting held in Jackson County this past March. The purpose of the meeting was to bring together non-profit organizations; federal, state and county agencies, and other individuals that have concerns with the housing issues and homeless situation affecting Jackson County. Sue Larson, USDA Rural Development manager for the Black River Falls local office, and Pat Stein, Bolton Refuge Housing, Inc. program director,

were present at the meeting where need for transitional housing was discussed at length. In 2003, 12 families were served through one emergency shelter in Jackson County and 48 were turned away. This number does not include the single men/women, but 48 families with children.

“I was amazed at the numbers that were reported,” said Larson, “and then I remembered reading somewhere in our regulations about a little used program that would allow us to use our inventory homes for transitional housing. I went back and researched this, we happened to have an inventory home in Black River Fall that might meet the criteria.”

Larson and Stein worked closely together determining what was needed to make house and the program work. In July 2004, Stein submitted the first application ever in the state of Wisconsin to utilize the program.

“In late August the application was accepted”, said Stein, “and we were thrilled.” “This is going to allow us to help so many more families.”

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Bolton Refuge Housing will be holding numerous events to increase the awareness and intervention of Domestic violence in Jackson County. For more information contact Bolton Refuge Housing, Inc.

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