



West Virginia Rural Development



75 High Street, Suite 320, Morgantown, WV 26505

JUNE 2005

Steptoe Appointed As WV State Director

ROBERT M. STEPTOE, III, has been appointed as the West Virginia USDA Rural Development State Director, effective May 2, 2005.

On April 26, 2005, Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns made the announcement. "Robert Steptoe brings to the Bush Administration rural development team knowledge of rural West Virginia," stated Johanns.

"He will coordinate the resources and partnerships needed to assist the rural communities in creating economic opportunities and improving the quality of life for their residents," emphasized Johanns.

Steptoe, hailing from Clarksburg, WV, formerly served as the legislative director for U.S. Representative Shelley Moore Capito of the 2nd District of West Virginia. He served in that capacity and as a district representative since December 2000.

Primary areas of focus during his service under Congresswoman Capito included addressing affordable housing, transportation, infrastructure and community & economic development issues.

Prior to joining Capito's staff, he served two years as a law clerk for the Honorable James C. Stucky of the Thirteenth Judicial District Court located in Charleston, WV.

Rob is a member of the Rotary International in Martinsburg, WV, and has volunteered with United Way, WV Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and WV "Read Aloud" program.

Steptoe holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Colorado and a Doctor of Jurisprudence from Mississippi College School of Law.



Rural Development Participates in Homeownership Month

On May 25, 2005, President Bush proclaimed the month of June as National Homeownership Month, a time to celebrate the nation's high rate of homeownership and to commit to do more to help families realize their dream of homeownership.

Increasing homeownership is a key goal of President Bush's ownership society.

In honor of National Homeownership Month, the local Romney, WV staff of the USDA Rural Development joined forces with one of the area's

major employers, Pilgrim's Pride, to provide temporary placement of a display within the former cafeteria at Pilgrim's Pride Live Production Plant in Moorefield, WV and to personally meet with the employees to provide information on Rural Development programs. Shown in the accompanying **photo** is Rural Development Specialist **Wendell Alt** furnishing Pilgrim's Pride employee Jose Pastrana with an informational brochure concerning the Section 502 direct housing loan program.



Homeownership is a cornerstone of the American dream. It provides security for children, upward mobility for families, stabilizes neighborhoods and creates stronger communities. Rural Development will be holding over 120 events nationwide to highlight families living the American Dream of Homeownership.

One Step Closer To A Dream: Self-Help Home Build

On June 16, 2005, staff members from Telamon (Self-Help Grantee), NCALL, Rural Development and homeowners/borrowers held their annual Self-Help Build Day in Martinsburg, WV.

The annual celebration is to honor the Presidentially proclaimed National Homeownership Month of June.

This event brings all people involved in the Self-Help Housing Program together to show their team spirit in helping with the actual construction of the program's homes.



When the additional volunteers are not present, there are four different families helping each other build their homes under this Self-Help Housing program.

The event was a huge success with a large turnout of volunteers from Rural Development, NCALL, and Telamon.

Along with help from others, Rural Development's own Craig Burns and Richard Satterfield (pictured above standing l to r with Suzanne Burns of

Rural Development and A. Michael Seigel, homeowner/borrower, kneeling) led the way with one of the bigger projects for the day which was constructing back decks for two of the homes.

Some of the volunteers worked together to put roofing on four storage sheds for the families, while some were guided by the construction supervisors to install interior framing in the homes.

Two of the sites had silt screens/barriers put into the ground across the property to prevent runoff into the town water.

Tuesday, June 28, marked another successful Self-Help Build Day for the Homeownership Month of June.

Southern Appalachian Rural Alliance, Inc. (SARA), brought together members of Rural Development, West Virginia Housing Development Fund, Federal Home Loan Bank, NCALL, and four families of homeowners/borrowers to help on the construction of the families' future homes.

It was a very exciting day, with the group of volunteers once again exceeding expectations of the construction supervisors.

One of the bigger projects of the day was the construction of six picnic tables for the homes. This task, which was expected to take a great deal of time, was completed before lunch. Many remarked this could have been due to the workers' motivation to have seating for lunch as quickly as possible. Other projects included constructing outbuildings and storage sheds.

The families also expressed their gratitude for the show of support from the different organizations. There was a great turnout of volunteers from all organizations involved in the projects.

Rural Development State Director, Rob Steptoe, also came and showed his support by getting his hands dirty and helping with the construction.



PHOTO: (left to right) Mary Randall (NCALL), Rita Betoney (Rural Housing Assistant, Rural Development) and Audrey Gwinn (Rural Development Assistant).

Marion County Holds "Voices & Visions" Forum

Jennifer Hilling and Dorina Helmick (pictured l to r) of the Mt. Clare Rural Development office attended "Voices & Visions," a public forum that was held on June 9 at Veterans Square in Fairmont.

They participated in the event on behalf of Rural Development in celebration of Homeownership Month. Their efforts will bring potential Single



Family Housing and Community Facilities projects to the agency.

Various community service organizations and professional firms participated in the informational session, offering resources for affordable homeownership, strategic planning, land use regulations, tax increment financing and new code regulations.

Page-Kincaid PSD Selected for Federal Funding

The **Page-Kincaid Public Service District (PSD)**, located in the western portion of Fayette County, currently provides public wastewater collection and treatment services to approximately 293 customers.

Approximately 420 additional rural residents of the Ingram Branch, Wriston, Robson, Mulberry Branch, North Page, and Johnson Branch area of the District need public sewer service since many of the individual septic systems have been ineffective in treating sewage due to

the inability of the soils to properly percolate.

The District also needs to upgrade its existing wastewater system by constructing sludge handling and disposal facilities. The cost for the entire project has been estimated at \$11,400,000.

The wastewater extension and upgrade project has been divided into two phases with service areas located within the Upper Kanawha Valley Enterprise Community.

Phase I includes the Ingram Branch and Wriston areas and will serve 222 new customers. Rural Utilities Programs loaned funds in the amount of \$550,000 and grant funds in the amount of \$3,000,000 were obligated in June, 2002.

Phase II includes the Robson, Mulberry Branch, North Page, and Johnson Branch areas and will serve 198 new customers. Rural Utilities Programs loaned funds in the amount of \$300,000 and grant funds in the amount of \$1,500,000 were obligated in June of this year.

25 Year Partnership Celebrated



PHOTO: (left to right) Tim Ryan (Rural Development Acting Deputy Under Secretary), Rob Steptoe (WV Rural Development State Director) and Kenneth Slone (KY Rural Development State Director).

Tennessee joined together in the heart of Central Appalachia (Blackey, KY) for this particular celebration.

Rural Development State Director **Rob Steptoe** represented West Virginia as he participated in the celebration of 25 Years of Partnership with Work Fest for National Homeownership Month.

The event was a chance for the Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprise (FAHE), USDA Rural Development and other long-time partners to work alongside each other to help a needy member of a community achieve the American dream of Homeownership.

Partners from four (4) states - West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky and

Also attending the event from USDA Rural Development was Tim Ryan, Acting Deputy Under Secretary from Washington, DC, and **Dianne Cryslor** and **Scott Mullin** from West Virginia Rural Development.

FAHE is a regional financial intermediary that provides resources to organizations providing affordable housing opportunities for low-income families in Central Appalachia.

Rural Development provided financing to the family and will reduce the cost of the home further with volunteer labor.

Announcements

Audrey Gwinn has been selected for the Rural Utilities Technician position in the Beckley Area Office. The new position becomes effective July 10, 2005.

Melissa Chase has been selected for the State Director's Secretary position, effective July 10, 2005.

If you are receiving this newsletter via mail and you would rather receive it via e-mail, please forward **Gail Bennett**, Editor, an email with such request to Gail.Bennett@wv.usda.gov.

Also, if you know anyone that should be added to our mailing list, please let Ms. Bennett know.

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