



State Director's Message

Nevada Rural Development Council (NRDC)

Gone largely unnoticed by many, a historic event took place in April of this year - the official formation of a state rural development council. Following months of meetings and teleconferences, a number of individuals from around our state concluded that the need existed and the time was right to form the Nevada Rural Development Council (NRDC). The NRDC is a non-profit, volunteer organization operating under the umbrella of the Nevada Association of Counties (NACO). The NRDC is comprised of representatives of the private for-profit and non-profit sector, local government, tribal government, state and federal agencies, individual citizens, and other entities committed to improving rural Nevada. The NRDC is a rural network established to coordinate and assist with locally determined issues to promote and enhance the quality of life in rural Nevada.

Consistent with its mission, the NRDC will be holding 19 listening sessions across the state during the months of August, September, and October. These informal sessions will provide the Council an idea of the current issues facing Nevada's rural communities. The top priorities will determine where the Council will focus their efforts during its first year. For information on the specific dates and locations of the listening sessions, please contact Karen Grillo of NACO at (775) 887-2584.

The following initial officers were recently elected by NRDC Board Members: Chairman, Keyth Durham of West Wendover; First Vice Chairman, Nancy Sheffield of Elko; Second Vice Chairman, Shirley McCrosky of Pioche; Secretary, Paul Johnson of Ely; Treasurer, Mary Lou Bentley of Carson City. (Continued Next Column)

State Director's Message (Continued)

Field Structure Consistency Plan

USDA Rural Development Nevada will soon be updating our program delivery throughout the State. The Nevada Consistency Plan was approved by Under Secretary Thomas C. Dorr in May 2003. All USDA Rural Development Field Offices will be involved in the delivery of all programs and additional staff will be added

USDA Rural Development Nevada held an all staff State Training Meeting in Carson City in May, to begin the implementation of the Nevada Consistency Plan.

In July, Mr. Dorr held the first combined National Rural Development Training Conference in Orlando, Florida. The main theme of the conference was connecting assets – housing, utilities, and business. Mr. Dorr said, "Connecting assets means the merging of people and programs in a renewed commitment to Rural Development. This will be vital to our mission for rural America; increasing economic opportunity and improving the quality of life, all while being responsive to our customers' needs."

Over the next several months, USDA Rural Development will be developing a new Strategic Plan to assist in delivering our programs to rural America. By updating and improving our goals and objectives, we will be able to build rural America from the ground up.

Larry J. Smith
State Director
USDA Rural Development
Nevada

Elko Field Office – Success Story

Room to Grow

Outline of Need: USDA Rural Development Elko Field Office was contacted by Mr. and Mrs. Jose Luna. Their trailer was old, very small, and only had two bedrooms. They wanted to buy a home so they could provide adequate living space for their son and daughter. Mrs. Luna said, “The kids are growing and they need their privacy.”

How Rural Development Helped: The Luna family had submitted their application on August 28, 2002. With the end of the fiscal year nearing, there were still low income funds available; but would they be determined eligible, find a suitable home, get an appraisal, and have the loan approved in 30 days? The Elko office expedited the verification process and the family worked hard to find a home. With the assistance of an outstanding local appraiser, their home was appraised, the loan was approved, and the money was reserved in the Lunas' name.

The Results: Mr. and Mrs. Luna now have a new home and enough room for the entire family. “We enjoy our house very much and would encourage other people to buy a home,” said the Lunas. “We will definitely benefit from owning a home.”

Helping minorities in rural America attain the dream of homeownership is an important goal of the Bush Administration. With down payment assistance provided by Rural Nevada Development Corporation, homeownership education given by Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Northern Nevada, and a loan from USDA Rural Development, this family was able to realize their dream of homeownership. **(Photo-Luna Family)**



Housing – Success Story and Follow Up

Transitional Housing Available in Elko

Outline of Need: Friends in Service Helping (FISH), a nonprofit organization in Elko, wanted to build a dormitory style annex for transitional housing.

How Rural Development Helped: USDA Rural Development’s Rural Housing Program Director and Community Development Specialist made an appointment to visit the Executive Director at FISH. After the introductions, one of the first questions the director asked was about transitional housing. They explained a little about the Community Facilities program and mentioned our Real Estate Owned (REO) and the transitional housing available for lease at \$1.00 per year.

Rural Development staff and the Executive Director of FISH inspected three non-program homes in Elko County. The Executive Director asked if they could lease all three properties. The staff explained what information Rural Development needed to lease the properties to FISH.

The Results: Less than a month later, FISH executed a lease for each of the three properties to use as transitional housing. This is a new program FISH has started, whereby they work with a homeless family for 18 to 24 months to return them to self-sufficiency.

FISH provides close supervision after entry into the program to insure that all needs of the entire family are being met from credit counseling and job training to parenting skills.

Follow Up Results – August 2003:

FISH contacted USDA Rural Development and is in the process of purchasing the three leased REO properties for the full appraised values.

William L. Brewer, Housing Program Director

Fallon Field Office – Success Story **Building Dreams and Communities** **in Rural Nevada**

Outline of Need: Owning a home had always been a distant dream for Joel and Summerlyn Sharpe. Early in their marriage they accepted the fact they would not be able to afford a home and would be living in their apartment for a very long time.

How Rural Development Helped: The couple heard about the USDA Rural Development Self-Help Housing program from a friend at church. They contacted Citizens for Affordable Homes, Inc., a nonprofit housing developer, learned there was no down payment required, closing costs were included in the USDA Rural Development loan, and all they had to do was build their new home with a group of people. They applied immediately, but tried not to get their hopes up because they weren't sure they would qualify. When Joel and Summerlyn received word they had been approved, they had to pinch themselves. It was a dream come true.



(Photo-Joel & Summerlyn Sharpe)

The Results: After 9 months of hard work, Joel and Summerlyn were able to move into their new home. They still can't believe they are homeowners. The Sharpes said, "We love our new home and we are incredibly grateful for this program. Thank you USDA, Citizens for Affordable Homes and to everyone else involved. You have truly made our dream of owning a home a reality."

Utilities – Success Story **USDA Rural Development Water and Waste** **Disposal Loan and Grant Funds for the Rural** **Town of Mason and the City of Yerington**

Outline of Need: The City of Yerington applied to USDA Rural Development for the funds to replace the Mason water system. The City is responsible for all operation and maintenance of the system. The service area has a population base of approximately 2,011.

How Rural Development Helped: USDA Rural Development approved a Water and Waste Disposal loan in the amount of \$516,664 and a grant in the amount of \$195,425. The project also received a grant from the Nevada Board for Financing Water Projects in the amount of \$4,035,171. **(Photo-David Law Inspecting New Tank)**



The Results: Rural Development funds were used to replace corroding water lines and to purchase a new tank and well for the Mason water system. Additionally, the funds were used to combine the City of Yerington and the Mason water systems. The project was completed at the end of 2002. It has prevented water loss due to leaks in the system and provided the community with emergency water storage and fire protection, as well as safe drinking water.

Mike E. Holm, Utilities Program Director

Business – Success Story and Follow Up
USDA Rural Development Provides Grant for Tractor-Trailer Simulator

Outline of Need: Great Basin College, Elko, Nevada needed funds to purchase a new tractor-trailer simulator. The simulator will allow student drivers to learn the operation of a tractor-trailer truck in a safe environment prior to actually driving an 18-wheel vehicle.

How Rural Development Helped: USDA Rural Development was able to assist the College with a Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) in the amount of \$50,000. USDA provides these grants to promote sustainable economic development in rural communities.

The funds have been used to purchase a tractor-trailer simulator, which was mounted on a flatbed trailer and shared by the rural communities in the College's service area. The College will provide the instructor for the training segments, including the simulator instructor and the 18-wheel vehicle instructor.

The Initial Results: August 2001 - This training will benefit students in Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander and White Pine Counties. The Swift Trucking Company has guaranteed 100 percent job placement to any graduate of the course that maintains a valid license.

The tractor-trailer training program has given truck drivers a new attitude about having a permanent home in a rural area. They can maintain their truck-driving job and still come home to a rural community. This will benefit all of the rural communities in the College's service area.

The Additional Results: September 30, 2002 - 113 males and 25 females registered for the Transport Technology course offered at Great Basin College. 87 of these students completed the course. (Continued Next Column)

Business – Success Story Continued

The following communities in Nevada were served: Battle Mountain, Carlin, Carson City, Crescent Valley, Elko, Ely, Gardnerville, Halleck, Henderson, Imlay, Lamoille, Las Vegas, Pahrump, Reno, Sparks, Spring Creek, Wells, and West Wendover.

82 students took advantage of the tractor-trailer simulator training. These are the results:

66 males completed the course

63 of these students used the simulator

61 males are currently employed using their Commercial Driver's License (CDL)

21 females completed the course

19 of these students used the simulator

17 females are currently employed using their CDL

Herb Shedd, Business-Cooperative Director

USDA Rural Development has four Field Offices:
Elko – (775) 738-8468
Fallon – (775) 423-7541
Las Vegas – (702) 262-9047
Winnemucca – (775) 623-4461
The State Office is located in Carson City –
(775) 887-1222 or TDD (775) 885-0633

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