



U.S. Department of Agriculture  
4440 NW 25<sup>th</sup> Place  
Gainesville, FL 32606  
[rd.usda.gov/fl](http://rd.usda.gov/fl)

# News Release

Contact:  
Danielle Ehlers (352) 338-3422

## **USDA Announces Investments to Improve Rural Electric Infrastructure in Florida**

*More than 1.8 million customers will benefit from improved or new service*

GAINESVILLE, Nov. 8, 2018 – Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett today announced that USDA is investing [over \\$235 million in three rural electric utility infrastructure projects](#) to improve electric reliability and resilience throughout Florida.

“Reliable and affordable power is important for economic development and quality of life,” Florida/USVI State Director Sydney Gruters said. “Under the leadership of Secretary Sonny Perdue, USDA is committed to being a strong partner in sustaining and modernizing rural electric infrastructure and assisting in the long term repair and improvement of electric infrastructure devastated by Hurricane Michael in the Florida panhandle.”

The projects announced today are being funded through USDA’s [Electric Program](#). These investments will help contribute to a stronger rural electric system by improving operations and reliability. These investments, such as the ones listed below, will benefit 7 million rural business and residential electric consumers across the country.

- Powersouth Energy Cooperative will receive \$134.9 million to build 12 miles of line, improve 22 miles, and make other system improvements, including seven new substations and environmental controls. PowerSouth is a generation and transmission facility that serves 20 distribution systems through 2,280 miles of line and ultimately delivers power to more than 400,000 residential, commercial, and industrial customers in Alabama and Florida.
- Seminole Electric Cooperative will use a \$7 million loan to finance a headquarters building for the new Business Continuity Center, which will provide for new back-up energy management controls, and make other system improvements. Seminole Electric Cooperative is among the nation’s largest not-for-profit electric generation and transmission cooperatives, serving nine distribution owners who in turn serve more than 1.6 million residential and commercial consumers across most of Florida.
- Georgia Transmission Corporation (GTC) will use a \$93.9 million loan to finance transmission improvement projects in Georgia, Alabama, and Florida that serve more

than 1.8 million consumers. GTC supplies transmission service to 38 electric membership cooperatives. It owns and maintains approximately 3,410 miles of transmission line and is the largest cooperative-owned transmission system in the United States.

In April 2017, President Donald J. Trump established the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity to identify legislative, regulatory and policy changes that could promote agriculture and prosperity in rural communities. In January 2018, Secretary Perdue presented the Task Force's findings to President Trump. These findings included 31 recommendations to align the federal government with state, local and tribal governments to take advantage of opportunities that exist in rural America. Increasing investments in rural infrastructure is a key recommendation of the task force.

To view the report in its entirety, please view the [Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity](#) (PDF, 5.4 MB). In addition, to view the categories of the recommendations, please view the [Rural Prosperity infographic](#) (PDF, 190 KB).

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov).

#

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.*