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**USDA Announces Investments in Community Facilities that will Benefit Three Educational Facilities and Five Communities in North Carolina**

RALEIGH, Nov. 28, 2018 – State Director for Rural Development Bob Chandler today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing $42 million to build or improve community infrastructure and essential services for 57,726 residents in North Carolina.

 USDA is investing in 42 projects through the [Community Facilities Direct Loan Program](https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program). The funding helps rural small towns, cities and communities make infrastructure improvements and provide essential facilities such as schools, libraries, courthouses, public safety facilities, hospitals, colleges and day care centers.

Here are examples of the North Carolina projects in which USDA is investing:

* The city of Rockingham will use a $6.7 million loan to help construct a 40,000-square-foot building. The city will own the building and lease it to Richmond Community College to provide space for the School of Business and Information Technology. This project will benefit the area’s 9,558 residents.
* The town of Smithfield will use a $1.1 million loan to purchase a 100 foot aerial fire truck to serve 12,019 residents.
* Louisburg College Foundation will use a $4.5 million loan to purchase three existing buildings benefitting the 900 students and faculty.
* The town of Haw River will use a $88,225 loan to purchase two police vehicles benefitting the 2,298 residents in the community.
* The city of Belmont will use a $1.4 million loan to renovate the Public Works building.
* Leicester Volunteer Fire Department will use a $5.8 million loan to construct a 15,400 square foot four bay fire station. The project will benefit the 12,514 residents in the Leicester community.
* Elizabeth City State University Housing Foundation will use a $19.8 million loan to renovate the Bias residence hall and refinance existing debt associated. The 2,500 students and faculty will benefit from the project.
* The Corporation for Educational Partnerships (Southern Wake) will use a $2.9 million loan to purchase 20.5 acre parcel of land for the high school expansion and the associated site preparation, road improvements and athletic field. The project will serve the area’s 17,937 residents.

 The projects announced today will help improve the quality of life in rural areas in Alaska, Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington.

 More than 100 types of projects are eligible for Community Facilities program funding. Eligible applicants include municipalities, public bodies, nonprofit organizations and federally and state-recognized Native American tribes. Applicants and projects must be in rural areas with a population of 20,000 or less. Loan amounts have ranged from $10,000 to $165 million.

    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](https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/rural-prosperity-report.pdf) (PDF, 5.4 MB). In addition, to view the categories of the recommendations, please view the [Rural Prosperity infographic](https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/rural-task-force-infographic.pdf) (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 services 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).

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