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News Release

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USDA Funding Available Across North Dakota to Purchase and Repair Homes

BISMARCK, N.D., June 4, 2019 – Acting Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Joel Baxley today kicked off National Homeownership Month by highlighting USDA’s ongoing role to help residents of America’s small towns and cities purchase homes in rural areas.

“Homeownership provides a strong foundation for hard-working people to build household wealth and climb the ladder of prosperity,” Baxley said. “By helping rural Americans achieve the dream of homeownership, USDA is supporting benefits that extend far beyond the home, resulting in stronger, more prosperous rural communities.”

USDA Single Family Housing programs have served more than 4.4 million families in rural America since President Truman signed the Housing Act in 1949. Throughout June, USDA employees will celebrate National Homeownership Month with events across the Nation that demonstrate USDA’s commitment to provide access to affordable housing for rural Americans.

“These programs provide opportunities for both existing homeowners and rural residents interested in owning a home,” Clare Carlson, USDA Rural Development North Dakota State Director said. “Anyone in rural North Dakota needing home health and safety repairs or opportunities for ownership should contact their local office to find out more information about available funding.”

Rural Development has several programs that support rural homeownership, including:

- USDA partnerships with private-sector lenders to help rural families buy homes. Providing loan guarantees for lenders working with low- to moderate-income families is the key to opening up private-sector homeownership opportunities.
- Direct home loans for very-low- and low-income applicants. Some borrowers qualify for program benefits that effectively reduce the interest rate on their monthly mortgage payments to one percent.
- Repair loans and grants that help people improve access to their homes and remove health and safety hazards such as poor wiring or plumbing.
- Mutual Self-Help Housing Technical Assistance grants are available to nonprofit organizations to help very-low- and low-income families build their own rural homes.

In the near future, North Dakota USDA Rural Development, North Dakota Guaranty and Title, North Dakota Housing Finance Agency, North Dakota Manufactured Housing Finance leaders and local mortgage lenders will be exploring opportunities to improve financing for manufactured homes to accommodate more low-income and first-time homebuyers. This group will discuss the pros and cons of financing for the manufactured housing industry, then potentially engage with dealers and builders. The overall goal is to evaluate the possibility of increasing affordable homeownership across the state through manufactured housing, which will expand opportunities for borrowers to access USDA programs.

As an example of USDA homeownership program possibilities, a Gate City Bank customer in Wahpeton utilized a Rural Development guarantee to purchase a home. He was a recent college graduate, which made him an excellent candidate for the program since he didn't have savings built up for a down payment. He was able to finance the full amount through the program. In addition, he refinanced his student loans at a low, fixed interest rate through a program offered by Gate City Bank called the BetterLife™ Student Loan Program. Joseph said he likes banking locally and has been with Gate City Bank for six years; they made the home loan process smooth, quick and easy. The home loan was exactly what he needed, and the student loan program was an added bonus.

To learn more about USDA's observance of National Homeownership Month and homeownership programs that, contact a [Rural Development State Office](#) near you. If you need assistance finding your local office, call (701) 530-2042.

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.

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/nd.

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