



# News Release

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## USDA Partners to Improve Community Infrastructure for 1.1 Million Rural Americans

GILLETTE, Wyo., Oct. 8, 2018 – Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is [investing \\$181 million in 88 projects](#) that will build community infrastructure and facilities in 27 states.

“Infrastructure is a foundation for quality of life and economic opportunity in small towns across our country,” Hazlett said. “Under the leadership of Secretary Sonny Perdue, USDA is committed to being a strong partner to building prosperity in rural America through modern infrastructure.”

Hazlett announced the funding during a forum co-sponsored by the National Association of Counties and the National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation. USDA is making the investments through the [Community Facilities Direct Loan Program](#). The funding helps rural areas make infrastructure improvements and provide essential facilities such as schools, libraries and day care centers. For example:

- In Kansas, the city of Neodesha will use a \$1.8 million loan to upgrade a city-owned natural gas system. All cast iron gas lines will be replaced, and gas meters will be relocated. The system improvement will serve about 2,500 residents.
- In North Carolina, the Thomas Jefferson Community Education Foundation will use a \$27 million loan to construct a new high school and pay off existing debt. The new school will include a gymnasium and 29 classrooms to accommodate up to 440 students.
- In Ohio, the Monroe County Commissioners will use a \$117,000 loan to purchase equipment to maintain 370 miles of rural roadways. The county will buy three trucks with snow plows, a backhoe, a tractor ditching head and a brush/tree chipper. This equipment will provide safer roads for the county’s 14,642 residents.

The projects announced today will help improve the quality of life for 1.1 million rural residents in Alaska, Alabama, Arizona, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia.

More than 100 types of projects are eligible for Community Facilities 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.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Omnibus spending bill increased the budget for the Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant program to \$2.8 billion, up \$200 million from FY 2017.

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).

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