

USDA Aids in Rebuilding the ‘Town Too Tough To Die’

On June 16, 2014, twin EF4 tornados tore through Stanton County Nebraska, leaving immense devastation and loss in their wake. One of these monstrous tornadoes ripped through the Village of Pilger, leveling or severely damaging over half of the town’s buildings. For a community of less than 400 residents, such destruction could have spelled the end of the village, but the tornado left something else behind, a tremendous resolution that the town would not be destroyed by the disaster. As the clean-up began a motto was adopted by the residents “Pilger, the town too tough to die.”



Cooper Family Community Center opened, Friday, June 16, 2017

The Pilger Development Fund was formed to help in the rebuilding effort of Pilger. One of the ideas that took strong root was a community and senior center, a multi-function gathering place for the community.

Stanton County Public Power District wanted to help in the rebuilding process as well as contribute to future economic development. They applied for and received a \$300,000 grant from USDA Rural Development and added a match of \$60,000 (20% match). Stanton County Public Power District then provided a no interest loan of \$360,000 for 10 years to the Pilger Development Fund to purchase equipment and furnishings for a new community center in Pilger. On June 16, 2017, three years after the tornadoes leveled the town, the Cooper Family Community Center held its ribbon cutting ceremony, allowing a community that came together in adversity a space to come together in celebration.

As the Pilger Development Fund pays back the loan, the Stanton County Public Power District will keep the funds in a revolving loan fund. The revolving loan fund will be utilized into the future to loan to businesses and not-for-profits for further rebuilding and economic development in an area that has taken the worst that nature can dish out and stood resolute.

Obligation Amount: \$300,000 REDG

Date of Obligation: 9/22/2016

Congressional District: Congressman Fortenberry, District 01; Senators Fischer and Sasse

Partners: \$60,000 match Stanton County Public Power District; \$1,002,400 in donations to the Pilger Community Development Fund.

Demographics: Stanton County population is 6,129, with a median household income of \$53,532.

Impact: The Cooper Family Community Center created two new jobs in a community of 352. The impact of the revolving loan fund program will help rebuild and grow the surrounding rural communities.
