



Rural Electric Improvement Project Includes Smart Grid Technology

Rural Development State Director Tom Fern recently met with Joni Hazelrigg, CEO of Fleming Mason Electric Cooperative, to highlight a utility improvement project that is nearing completion.

USDA awarded a \$12.38 million rural electric loan guarantee to Fleming Mason Energy Cooperative to build or improve more than 52 miles of line and offer improved service to new and existing customers.

The project also includes smart grid improvements such as advanced metering infrastructure. Smart grid refers to the application of technologies designed to modernize our nation's electric system. These technologies increase the reliability of electric power by helping utilities better manage the electric grid, such as during peak demand, to improve operational efficiencies.

Fleming Mason has approximately 24,000 utility customers in eight Kentucky counties. Installing smart grid electric meters benefits customers as well as the utility provider. Customers will have the option to access daily usage rates online and pre-pay for electric. Fleming Mason receives information from the meters such as usage readings, voltage monitoring and reports of outages. This means the utility company, in some cases, can fix a power outage before a customer reports it.

A modern, reliable electric system is critical to attract and retain residents and businesses to rural communities. USDA has a long history, dating back to the New Deal era, of working with rural utilities



Rural Development State Director Tom Fern and Joni Hazelrigg, CEO of Fleming Mason Electric Cooperative, discuss details of an electric improvement project at the company's operations center.

to help bring needed infrastructure and service improvements. Through the years, these investments have brought new economic and social opportunities and have enhanced the quality of life in the nation's rural communities.

Fleming County is part of the USDA StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity, which addresses the unique set of challenges faced by many of America's rural communities. Through StrikeForce, USDA is leveraging resources and collaborating with over 400 community organizations, businesses, foundations, universities and other groups to support 80,300 projects with more than \$9.7 billion in USDA investments into rural America.

Obligation Amount: \$12.38 million loan guarantee

Date of Obligation: May 2013

Congressional District: Rep. Thomas Massie (KY-4) and Rep. Andy Barr (KY-6); Senators Mitch McConnell and Rand Paul

Partners: Fleming Mason Electric Cooperative

Demographics: Fleming County is part of the USDA StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity

Impact: Electric Loan Guarantee to upgrade utility services to serve new and existing customers and install smart-grid technology