USDA Launches Resource Guide to Help Rural Communities Seeking Disaster Resiliency and Recovery Assistance

WASHINGTON, Sept. 15, 2021 – United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Justin Maxson today unveiled a resource guide as part of National Preparedness Month to help rural communities seeking disaster resiliency and recovery assistance.

This guide follows the Biden-Harris Administration’s announcement of the American Jobs Plan, which targets investments to support infrastructure in communities that are most physically and financially vulnerable to climate-driven disasters.

“According to the President’s plan, the United States endured 22 separate billion-dollar weather and climate disasters in 2020, costing $95 billion in damages to homes, businesses and public infrastructure. Already this year, we have seen historic storms like Ida and fires in the West ravage urban and rural communities alike,” Maxson said. “Under the leadership of President Biden, Vice President Harris and Secretary Vilsack, USDA remains committed to helping America's rural communities build back better by making rural infrastructure – including homes and businesses – more resilient in the face of increasingly severe floods, wildfires, hurricanes and other risks.”

New Mexico Rural Development acting state director Eric Vigil added, “New Mexico is fortunate that we do not experience hurricanes, but we need to keep in mind that we do live in an area that continues to experience drought, wildfires, floods, and major winter weather conditions, which all set the basis for a massive disaster.”

The resource guide outlines USDA Rural Development (RD) programs and services that can help rural residents, businesses and communities impacted by disasters and support long-term planning and recovery efforts. A resource matrix categorizes RD programs that can support preparedness and recovery through four key assistance types:

- housing assistance, and community and economic development planning;
- infrastructure and equipment financing;
- industry, entrepreneurship and local business development; and
- education and training.

The guide also includes information on technical assistance providers and other federal agencies that work with USDA to support rural communities in disaster planning and recovery efforts. It features examples of how customers have used USDA programs to support their recovery efforts.
Additional resources to support rural communities seeking disaster assistance are available at https://www.rd.usda.gov/page/rural-development-disaster-assistance.

To learn more about investment resources for rural areas, contact the nearest USDA Rural Development state office.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans 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, tribal and high-poverty areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov. If you'd like to subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit our GovDelivery subscriber page.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

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