

Some Important News for Communities on Upcoming Funding for Disaster Relief and Stimulus Eligible Projects.

Advance notice on Disaster Relief Funding:

On August 18, 2008 part of Wisconsin received a FEMA disaster declaration due to major flooding. Wisconsin, along with numerous other states, is in this unfortunate situation. In an effort to assist these states it is anticipated that Rural Development's Water and Environmental Program will have additional funding available in the form of loans and grants to assist communities with any needs regarding municipal water and sanitary sewer facilities. It is expected that a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) will be published shortly giving communities a 30 day window of opportunity to apply for this additional funding. Projects with a direct impact from the flooding will receive the highest priority but any project in the designated area is eligible in communities with a population of 10,000 or less. Applications will be acted on quickly and will be competing for funds with other States with disaster declarations. Water and Environmental program regulations apply. For further information, please contact the Rural Development State Office (715) 345-7610 to request information on applying and the Area Office contact information. The FEMA map of counties in the Wisconsin designation can be found at <http://www.fema.gov/news/event.fema?id=10028>.

Advance notice on Stimulus Funds:

I am sure everyone has been anxiously watching the news about stimulus funds and how those funds will be able to assist rural communities. The House proposal indicates a substantial amount of funds will be available through Rural Development. These funds will be available for municipalities, non-profit corporations and federally recognized Indian Tribes on a first come first served basis to finance municipal water, wastewater, storm water, solid waste and other essential community facilities. As this bill is being debated at this time and not passed into law there will likely be changes but to be prepared communities should take a serious look at potential needs and projects that are or can be shovel ready. From the House proposal within 120 days of the law being passed a significant portion of the stimulus money will need to be set aside for projects ready to go. With the new government transparency requirements these projects will be expected to show results quickly. The Rural Development funds will be in the Water and Environmental Program and the Community Facilities programs for communities with a population of 20,000 or less. The House version proposes \$1.239 billion will go to the Community Facilities Program. These funds can be used to finance such facilities as libraries, fire stations, medical clinics, community centers, nursing homes and day care centers. The Water and Environmental program is proposed to receive \$3.8 billion dollars in the form of low interest loans and grants. These funds can be used to finance utility facilities for communities with a population of 10,000 or less. If you have been waiting for the opportune time to assist your community this is it. For questions on your eligibility please contact the Rural Development State Office at 715-345-7610 for further information and the Area Office contact information.