



NEWS RELEASE

USDA FOREST SERVICE, DAKOTA PRAIRIE GRASSLANDS
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Contact: Judith M. Lang, 701-250-4463, Extension 115

COMMUNITIES AWARDED GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING AND RURAL COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

Bismarck, May 23, 2002 – USDA Forest Service, Dakota Prairie Grasslands recently awarded \$80,000 in Rural Community Assistance (RCA) grants to seven communities. “Communities try hard to become destination points. Without having good facilities it’s hard to get people to come off the beaten path. These grant dollars help stretch limited community resources to complete projects and make them work,” says Duke Rosendahl, Executive Director of Hazen Community Development, Inc.

The RCA program is one of several USDA Economic Action programs aimed at helping natural-resource dependent communities become more self-sufficient. RCA strives to integrate economic development through economic diversity, community development, and natural resource conservation activities. “RCA gets people involved and working together to improve the social, economic, and environmental health of the community,” says Grasslands Supervisor, Dave Pieper.



Dakota Prairie Grasslands works in partnership with the North Dakota Forest Service (NDFS) to deliver Economic Action Programs locally. NDFS, through State and Private Forestry programs, is committed to helping communities develop long-term sustainability. “Building sustainable communities through forestry is our long-term goal,” says Larry Kotchman, State Forester. In addition to community forestry programs, National Fire Plan (NFP) dollars are available through NDFS and can be used to help communities address fire-risk management strategies and to capitalize on enterprise opportunities that reduce and utilize hazardous fuels and hazardous fuel byproducts.

The Division of Community Services (DCS) – a part of the North Dakota Department of Commerce – also provides assistance to communities to organize and plan for a more sustainable future. Communities who submitted RCA grant proposals for strategic planning were awarded planning grants through the Division of Community Services. DCS utilizes tools developed through the Leadership Initiative for Community Strategic Planning (LICSP) to help communities meet today’s challenges. “This process assists communities to be agents of positive change,” says Mike Spletto, DCS HOME Program Manager.

Twenty-one proposals were submitted through the 2002 RCA Grant Application process. Through partnership efforts between the USDA Forest Service-Dakota Prairie Grasslands, North Dakota Forest Service, and the Division of Community Services, six communities were awarded grants to develop strategic plans and seven RCA grants were awarded for project development. Division of Community Services awarded



\$24,900 to cities of South Heart, Scranton, Lidgerwood, Arthur, and to the Carrington Job Development Authority for the development of strategic action plans. North Dakota Forest Service awarded a \$5,000 NFP grant to the City of St. John to incorporate fire risk management strategies into the City of St. John's Strategic Community Action Plan.

USDA Forest Service, Dakota Prairie Grasslands awarded \$80,000 in RCA grants for project development to seven communities for recreation, eco-tourism, and community development activities. The following 2002 RCA grants were awarded:

- Bowdon, ND -- \$8,000 RCA grant to establish a campground facility to capitalize on the increasing area travelers, local seasonal workers, and hunters.
- Cooperstown, ND -- \$1,000 RCA grant for a city park restoration project to improve access to the park and camping hookups.
- Hazen, ND -- \$20,000 RCA grant to build a comfort station and tourism interpretive center rest area at the Hazen Lewis and Clark RV Park and Campground.
- Lemmon, SD -- \$10,000 RCA grant to provide family recreational activities through the development of a playground area in the Lemmon City Park.
- St. John, ND -- \$9,000 RCA grant to develop marketing brochures promoting the City of St. John, Martineau House Tourism Information Center, Rolette County Historical Society Museum, Turtle Mountain equine and alternative agriculture businesses; historical and cultural opportunities.



- Valley City, ND -- \$20,000 RCA grant to build a Scenic Byway portal and visitor center featuring “Rosebud,” an 1881 Northern Pacific superintendent’s railroad car as a tourist destination.
- Williams County, ND -- \$12,000 RCA grant to develop the Whitetail Bay Lewis and Clark Interpretive Trail and promote bird watching in northwest North Dakota.

Rural communities, counties, Tribes, and non-profit organizations may submit grant proposals for RCA funding consideration. To be eligible for RCA funding, communities must be located within 100 miles of a national forest or grassland, demonstrate natural resource dependence, and have a population under 10,000. Request for proposals are released in mid-January and the grant application deadline is at the end of March. More information about the RCA program can be found on the Dakota Prairie Grasslands website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/dakotaprairie/grants/index.htm> or call the Dakota Prairie Grasslands office at 701-250-4443.

For more information on grant programs available through North Dakota Forest Service, call 701-328-9944. Information on the Leadership Initiative for Community Strategic Planning can be found at <http://www.state.nd.us/dcs/comdev/planning.html>, or contact the Division of Community Services at 701-328-5300.

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