

News Release



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USDA Loan Funds Help Foundation Spur Rural Business, Job Growth

In Central Minnesota, Seven High-Unemployment Counties will See Investments

The Initiative Foundation will use \$750,000 in recently announced federal funds to boost economic development and job creation in central Minnesota.

Funds from the USDA Rural Development Intermediary Relending Program will be matched with \$250,000 from the Initiative Foundation to create a lending program to start or expand businesses in Crow Wing, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Pine, Todd and Wadena counties. Each county has high poverty and unemployment levels.

“The new loan program from the USDA will enable the Initiative Foundation to secure quality jobs in the most economically distressed areas of our region,” said Randy Olson, Initiative Foundation vice president for economic opportunity. “Our goal is to fill financing gaps that prevent high-growth businesses from getting loans they need to start or expand.”

The Initiative Foundation was the only organization in Minnesota named to receive part of the more than \$21.3 million announced on May 13 and authorized through the 2008 federal Farm Bill.

“These funds will help create and save jobs and provide a boost to small businesses in central Minnesota,” said Colleen Landkamer, USDA Minnesota state director. “As our economy continues to recover, it is important that rural businesses have access to capital and funding sources in order to grow and expand. We are pleased that the Initiative Foundation will be managing these funds and working directly with area businesses.”

Since 2003, USDA Rural Development has awarded eight grants to the Initiative Foundation totaling more than \$2 million for community revitalization and economic development.

Serving central Minnesota’s 14 counties, the Initiative Foundation offers loans to businesses, grants to nonprofits, and a variety of leadership programs that enable citizens to build stronger communities.

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