

RURAL AMERICA RELIES ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT



USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER PROGRAMS DRIVE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

ECONOMIC VITALITY FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Critical infrastructure, including adequate water service, is a basic requirement for a healthy economy, encourages employment opportunities and makes a community a desired place to live and work. The nearly 45,000 water systems in rural America are anchor institutions in their communities.

In many rural communities water infrastructure is past its useful life. Without adequate water and sanitation services, businesses move out of our rural communities, forcing the next generation to leave to find better opportunities. Those left behind are robbed of hope for a prosperous future.

Rural America's economy is driven by entrepreneurship, and made of a diverse range of operations through over 700,000 businesses. Rural areas produce most of the food we consume, provide lumber and other forest products used to build our homes and furniture, and supply the energy we consume daily.

Rural economies are deeply connected to their urban counterparts

USDA RD WEP not only provides essential services to the families that live in rural America, but also all business activities. These include small businesses, farming, manufacturing, emergency services, and more. In rural America, nearly 85% of all business establishments are small. These small businesses are critical to local economies, employing 54% of workers in their communities. Rural communities need access to funding through USDA RD WEP to thrive.

Today's Congressional policies and funding decisions are jeopardizing the economic vitality of every community in rural America. Budget cuts will leave USDA WEP unable to accomplish its mission. WEP is instrumental in helping rural America increase economic opportunities for all rural people.

PROMOTION BY THE NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS (WEP)

In 2023, USDA RD WEP funded over \$1.7 billion in projects to small and rural communities.

The average median household income for communities that received WEP funding was \$37,029, half of the national average household income of \$74,580.

In 2023, 308 WEP projects addressed health and sanitary challenges and 28,326 new connections provided drinking water to residents for the first time, resulting in over 400,000 individuals and households benefiting from this funding.

TELL CONGRESS NOW

KEEP RURAL AMERICA STRONG!

Scan the QR Code to learn more about how you can help keep Rural America Strong!



THE IMPACT



WEP MADE SCWSA's NEW WWTP POSSIBLE IN SALUDA, SOUTH CAROLINA

RURAL AMERICA DESERVES RURAL DEVELOPMENT

“ We realized there was a better way to manage our treatment process within our community, and although it was a significant undertaking, We owed it to our customers to find a better solution. ”

Jason Fell, General Manager

Saluda County Water & Sewer Authority (SCWSA)

IMPACT IN ACTION

Saluda County Water and Sewer Authority (SCWSA) was established 30 years ago and serves the unincorporated areas of Saluda County and is home to nearly 20,000 people. Its water and sewer system serves both residential and commercial customers, including two major agricultural companies which depend on SCWSA to maintain high standards of water quality and for their production processes regulated by USDA.

With USDA-RD funding, SCWSA is currently building its own wastewater treatment plant, which will support all the local utilities in Saluda County. The 4.0 MGD WWTP will allow its largest commercial customers to grow so they can continue to be competitive nationally. It will also help environmental initiatives. The additional capacity will allow SCWSA in the future to serve failing septic tank systems leaching into Lake Murray, South Carolina's largest lake, and SCWSA's WTP raw water source.

RD obligated over \$43 million to SCWSA's WWTP project. With financing secured, SCWSA swiftly initiated sewer agreements with the towns of Saluda and Ridge Spring's utilities to facilitate a single, regional, and more efficient treatment plant. Following the hydraulic cycle, SCWSA can tangibly improve the quality of the surface water in the Saluda Water Basin.

CALL TO ACTION

Fund Water Infrastructure - Stand Up for USDA Rural Development

Rural Development will continue to play a vital role in modernizing, preserving, and protecting rural America's infrastructure and public health. You can help secure its future today by signing the pledge and writing to your Congressional representatives today.

Providing adequate support and resources necessary to protect and enhance the environment, public health, sustainability of utilities, and economic vitality of rural America with clean, affordable, and safe water service is a primary responsibility for our federal elected officials.

Visit www.ruralwaterstrong.org to learn more.

