

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
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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.

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!





USDA RD HELPED CREATE A NEW WATER SYSTEM IN SOUTH CAROLINA'S LOWCOUNTRY.

RURAL AMERICA DESERVES RURAL DEVELOPMENT

“ As challenging as times are today, small towns and rural areas depend on the USDA RD program more than ever. It serves as its only lifeline for affordable funding to provide safe reliable water and sewer services to the many people living in small town America. ”

- Brian Burgess, LRWS General Manager



NRWA

IMPACT IN ACTION

In the heart of the Lowcountry of South Carolina in Hampton County, the towns of Brunson, Gifford, Hampton, Varnville and Yemassee created a new joint regional water and sewer system. The system was created in 2012 and began operations in 2013. The system was named the Lowcountry Regional Water System (LRWS) for the area it served. The formation was based on a need to address the challenges small systems have to remain sustainable and viable. The leadership in the communities with the full support and guidance of state and federal agencies realized that combining their strengths and working together they could overcome many of the challenges that were facing them. Economies of scale through regionalization of existing system operations not only increased its viability it also produced opportunities for economic growth. The USDA RD program provided guidance with the formation of its new system, its consolidation of the existing water and sewer system's debt and new loan/grant opportunities available to the new system. Since the time of formation, USDA RD has provided over \$15 million in loan and grant funds to enable the system to rehabilitate portions of its aging infrastructure, upgrade and modernize its meter reading system and to make improvements that enhanced the performance of its system. The creation of LRWS and the system improvements it has made have led to new investments in the county. One of the larger investments for the county was the Agriculture Technology campus that invested of over \$300 million and created over 1,000 jobs.

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.