

## USDA Rural Development invites pre-applications for grant funds

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

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Colorado Rural Development is currently accepting pre-applications for the Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) program. The RBEG program provides grants for rural projects that finance and facilitate development of small and emerging rural businesses, help fund business incubators and help fund employment-related adult education programs.

In Fiscal Year 2012, last year Colorado funded nearly \$366,950 in RBEG applications statewide. "This grant program reaches the core of rural development by benefiting small and emerging private businesses and increasing economic development in areas across our state," said April Dahlager, director, Business and Cooperative Programs.

Eligible applicants include rural public entities (towns, communities and state agencies), Indian tribes and rural, private, non-profit corporations.

The RBEG program serves as a catalyst for rural communities to launch new business ventures. In Fiscal Year 2012, Windsor Restoration & Historical Association Inc. received a \$99,950 RBEG to renovate the remaining 1,336 square feet of the Windsor Hotel building complex to create a conference center with several areas for use by rural small businesses to enhance and expand their market area and clientele.

"Being able to provide funding to rural areas that can be the catalyst for economic development is a crucial part of Rural Development's mission," said Dahlager. "This program has been very competitive in the past years, and I encourage applicants to apply early, as this year, funds are limited," said Dahlager.

Pre-applications must be submitted to a local Rural Development office by Dec. 31.

For further information on rural programs or to locate the closest office, visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/co>

USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, administers and manages housing,

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business and community infrastructure and facility programs through a national network of state and local offices.

Rural Development has an existing portfolio of more than \$172 billion in loans and loan guarantees. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America.

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