

USDA Helped Improve Essential Services for 7 Million Rural Residents in 2017

Michigan Received 12 Projects Serving More than 180,000 Rural Residents

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25, 2018 – Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue today announced that USDA invested in nearly 400 projects to provide essential services for more than 7 million people in rural areas across the country in Fiscal Year 2017.

“Partnering with our small towns and cities to support essential services that rural residents need is one way USDA is facilitating prosperity in rural America,” Perdue said. “USDA’s investments will help communities significantly improve their schools, hospitals and public safety facilities, and improve the quality of life.”

USDA infused \$1.5 billion into rural areas [in 2017](#) through the [Community Facilities Direct Loan Program](#) for projects such as schools, libraries, municipal centers, first responder vehicles and equipment, social service buildings, recreational activities and other community needs. These investments are helping nearly 7 million rural residents.

In Michigan, the city of Ludington received a \$1.6 million loan to replace its 50-year-old fire station, which was once a storage facility that was transformed into a fire station in the 1970s. The current space is inadequate and does not meet accessibility standards for people with disabilities. The new, larger station will include a training room, administrative offices, and locker and storage rooms for equipment and supplies. Most importantly, the updated facility will meet all current building codes. The project will benefit more than 8,000 residents.

Delta County, in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, received a \$17.9 million loan for the construction of a jail facility in Escanaba. The building will have 201 total beds and the design includes built-in expansion capabilities to accommodate additional housing and mental health treatment needs.

“These projects are great examples of how we are helping rural Michigan communities,” said USDA Rural Development State Director for Michigan Jason Allen. “Last fiscal year we were able to support 12 Michigan projects totaling more than \$75 million and serving 180,000 rural residents.”

In April 2017, President Donald J. Trump established the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity to identify legislative, regulatory and policy changes that could promote agriculture and prosperity in rural communities. In January 2018, Secretary Perdue presented the Task Force’s findings to President Trump, which included 31 recommendations to align the federal government with state, local and tribal governments to take advantage of opportunities that exist in rural America. To view the report in its entirety, please view the [Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity](#). In addition, to view the categories of the recommendations, please view the [Rural Prosperity infographic](#).

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community services such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov.

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