

Written by USDA Office of Communications
Friday, 08 November 2013 10:16

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 8, 2013 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced funding for 424 projects across the nation that will help agricultural producers and rural small businesses reduce their energy consumption and costs, and use renewable energy technologies in their operations.

"Today's Rural Energy for America Program announcements will provide further assistance for agricultural producers and rural small business owners to save energy, promote renewable energy creation, and boost the bottom line for their operation," Vilsack said. "By investing in renewable energy created in rural America, USDA is able to provide new income opportunities in our small towns while supporting the Obama Administration's comprehensive effort to combat the impacts of a changing climate."

Vilsack noted that today's funding announcement is another reminder of the importance of Farm Bill programs for the economic vitality of rural America, and a compelling reason why Congress must get a comprehensive Food, Farm and Jobs Bill passed as soon as possible. A comprehensive new Food, Farm and Jobs Bill would further expand the rural economy, Vilsack added.

The Rural Energy for America Program offers financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses to purchase and install renewable energy systems and make energy-efficiency improvements. These federal funds leverage other private funding sources for businesses.

Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Announces Projects to Improve Farm and Rural Business Energy Efficiency

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Vilsack announced more than \$14 million in grants and loan guarantees to business owners in 22 states, the Western Pacific, the Virgin Islands and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. For example, Grinnell Markets Inc., of Grinnell, Iowa, has been selected to receive a \$39,000 grant to install more energy efficient lighting and refrigeration and to install a more efficient heating, ventilation and cooling system. L&S Pumping, Inc., in Strawberry Point, Iowa, was selected for an \$11,675 grant to help purchase and install a geothermal heating and cooling system for a business equipment maintenance shop. DeChant-Notley Farms in Oberlin, Ohio, has been selected for a \$29,775 grant to replace an inefficient grain dryer. The new model is expected to save 635,000 kilowatt hours of energy annually. That amounts to a 45 percent energy savings annually. In Derwood, Minn., Derwood Technologies Inc. is receiving a \$14,800 grant to install a 9.95 kilowatt solar project on a building.

Under REAP, up to 25 percent of an eligible renewable energy system or energy efficiency improvement project can be funded through a grant, and additional support can be provided in the form of a loan guarantee. Since the start of the Obama Administration, REAP has helped fund more than 8,250 renewable energy and energy efficiency projects nationwide.

Harvey Allen of Elfrida, Ariz., used a \$49,975 REAP grant he received in 2011 to help install photovoltaic water pumps. The REAP grant covered about a quarter of the cost of the new photovoltaic system with Allen covering the remaining costs. Allen said high utility costs were making it hard for him to keep his business profitable. The new pumps cut his well service utility bills in half. The meter for the new water pumps tracks how much electricity is being generated and how much is being used. Thanks to Arizona's abundant sunshine, the second time Allen irrigated with the new system, he discovered that he actually had a credit on his energy bill.

View the [list of recipients](#) announced today under the Rural Energy for America Program. Each award is contingent upon the recipient meeting the terms of the grant or loan agreement.

President Obama's plan for rural America has brought about historic investment and resulted in stronger rural communities. Under the President's leadership, these investments in housing, community facilities, businesses and infrastructure have empowered rural America to continue leading the way – strengthening America's economy, small towns and rural communities. USDA's investments in rural communities support the rural way of life that stands as the backbone of our American values.

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