

MEDIA ADVISORY

USDA Satellite Features Feed

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FEATURE – USDA/ARRA GRANT BRINGS WATER TO OKLAHOMA TOWN

INTRO: Recovery Act funds are helping to bring water to a small town in Oklahoma, through the U-S Department. of Agriculture’s Rural Development agency. U-S-D-A’s Susan Carter has more. (1:59)

SMITHVILLE IS A SMALL TOWN IN RURAL MCCURTAIN COUNTY, OKLAHOMA. AND IT HAS A PROBLEM.

Jerry Tucker, USDA Rural Development: Decent, safe and sanitary water is a real hard item to come by in this area. The source is unreliable. These creeks like this go dry from time to time. The wells that most people have in this area go dry with regularity. Groundwater contamination with lots of the wells, it’s become a real issue.

Debbie Prise, Smithville, Oklahoma resident: Until we started having the well problem we’d wash dishes and clothes and all take showers and never worry about the water running out. But now that’s our major concern every day.

WHEN THE PRISE FAMILY’S WELL WENT DRY, THEY HAD TO HAUL IN WATER FROM A CREEK, MANY MILES AWAY.

Prise: My husband just filled up the tank today so I’ll wash dishes tonight. But if I wash dishes tonight we won’t wash clothes. And we just bathed at the church and hauled our dirty laundry off and hauled bottled water in to cook and drink.

Tucker: You know, our schools, businesses are hindered by lack of potable water. It’s something that we just cannot allow to continue.

Susan Carter, USDA (Stand-up): The residents of this community are finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. For almost fifteen years they’ve been working on something that most of us probably take for granted. - a decent, reliable and sanitary water system.

Tucker: We are in the process of installing a new water system, from about 25-30 miles south of here, to correct this problem.

WITH RECOVERY ACT FUNDS, A U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT WILL PAY FOR THE PIPELINE THAT WILL TRANSFORM THIS TOWN.

Tucker: It will encourage rural economic development. Tourism will be a big issue here that will benefit from this. Not to mention the many homes, schools and businesses can grow, come into this area and be a part of this revitalization.

OFFICIALS SAY THIS SUCCESS STORY COMES FROM TEAMWORK.

Tucker: This couldn't be done without all our partners – federal agencies, state agencies, local participants. With Rural Development, we're here with them and we're here to stay.

IN SMITHVILLE, OKLAHOMA, FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M SUSAN CARTER.