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Minnesota Housing Partnership

MHP Commits to \$376,000 Investment in Economic Development in Rural Minnesota

MHP Wins \$188,000 Award from USDA for Rural Community Development Initiative Program

St. Paul, Minn. (February 5, 2008) – The USDA recently awarded the Minnesota Housing Partnership (MHP) \$188,000 to support local economic development organizations create affordable housing in rural Minnesota. MHP is one of only 38 organizations from across the country to receive a Rural Community Development Initiative Program (RCDI) grant in this round of funding.

MHP is matching the USDA grant dollar-for-dollar with funds provided by the McKnight Foundation. Together, the funds totaling \$376,000 will assist five organizations in Northeast, West Central, and Southeast Minnesota to create and preserve affordable homes. These areas were targeted to reflect communities facing significant economic growth over the next five years, but lacking the affordable housing development capacity necessary to address the associated housing demand.

In Northeast Minnesota, MHP will provide technical and financial assistance to Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA), Kootasca Community Action, and the City of Aurora. The region is preparing for a major economic expansion along the Route-169 corridor which is expected to result in 1,700 new permanent jobs and 4,000 temporary construction jobs, requiring a substantial increase in the area's affordable housing stock.

In West Central Minnesota, MHP will provide technical and financial assistance to the City of Ortonville to create new housing development, a new housing program, and increase historic preservation capacity. Ortonville is located near South Dakota where the construction of a new power plant, one mile from the border, will result in the creation of 1,200 temporary construction jobs and 30 new permanent jobs over the next five years. Ortonville is the only town within 25 miles of the new plant, and expects to house a large majority of those new workers.

In Southeast Minnesota, MHP will provide technical assistance to the Bluff Country Multi-County Housing and Redevelopment Authority on rental housing rehabilitation, attaching support services to rental housing units, and housing program/disaster relief program delivery. Bluff Country HRA is located in Rushford, the epicenter of the severe flooding that struck Southeastern Minnesota in August, 2007. The HRA wants to expand its capacity from housing program delivery to the new functions of housing development and rehabilitation, supportive service delivery, and disaster relief for local beneficiaries.

The Minnesota Housing Partnership is a statewide nonprofit organization that advances the preservation and creation of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income people as a means of strengthening communities and families. MHP provides local governments and nonprofit housing organizations access to loans, grants, and technical expertise to plan and construct housing, in addition to advocating and educating people on sound housing policies. MHP's work in Greater Minnesota is primarily supported by The McKnight Foundation.

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