

RURAL ADVOCATE

WINTER 2006

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Department of Rural Services Director Bruce Campbell Resigns

November 9, 2006

Hon. Mike Huckabee
Governor of Arkansas
State Capitol
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Governor,

I am writing to inform you of my official resignation as Director of the Department of Rural Services at the close of business on January 9th, 2007. I feel that this is the right thing to do and will allow time for the new Governor to select his director prior to the legislative session. I have also instructed my staff to cooperate in any way possible with Governor-elect Beebe's transition team.

The past seven plus years in this position have been the most gratifying of my professional life and I truly thank you for this opportunity. My staff is the best in the state. The members of the Arkansas Rural Development Commission have been wonderful teammates in an extraordinary effort to enhance the lives of Rural Arkansans. I also thank you for allowing me the chance to get to know and work with so many rural firefighters, rural community volunteers, mayors, and county judges from across the state. I also cherish the deep personal friendships I have made these past years with a great group of Legislators.

Thank you again, sir, for all the opportunities you have given me.

Respectfully Submitted.

Your Friend,

Bruce W. Campbell
Director, Department of Rural Services



During Campbell's seven year tenure as the Director of the Department of Rural Services, DRS and the Arkansas Rural Development Commission have awarded 692 grants totaling \$9,559,000 to rural Arkansans.

Western Greene County Fire Station Receives Grant to Rebuild



The communities in Western Greene County are like many areas in rural Arkansas. They work hard and look out for one another. The resilience of these community members was put to the test when a fire destroyed the Western Greene County Fire District Fire Station.

Residents of Finch, Light, Stanford, and Walcott were devastated to learn that the fire station and community building they had for over twenty-five years lay in ruin. Not only did they lose their fire station, but their home to CPR classes, emergency meetings, polling sites, and gatherings as well.

“There was shock. The fire station was part of the community,” said Secretary Treasurer Bart Rowe. “When you drive by and it’s not there, it’s almost like a missing part.”

Not that long ago in 2005 residents celebrated after receiving notice that their 8/9 ISO rating was being lowered to a class 6. Volunteers put in five years of hard work to get that rating, and they were proud of it. The improved ISO rating saved citizens 30-35% on insurance premiums. Now it seemed they had to start again from scratch.

Residents of the Western Greene County Fire Department were quick to mourn their loss and took action. Realizing the



The Western Greene County Fire Department received \$15,000 to rebuild their fire station community building after it was destroyed in a fire.

rising cost of construction materials, they banded together with community fundraising events to raise all the money they could



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to erect a new building for the communities. Though they scraped together their fundraising efforts, insurance proceeds,

and Act 833 money, they still didn’t have even half of what they needed for the new building.

That’s when Rowe called the Department of Rural Services. Staff told Rowe about the Rural Services Community Grant Program and encouraged him to apply for the grant. Representative Travis Boyd was also quick to act.

“When he heard of our loss he knew I need to take care of those folks and he jumped in and took care of us. Travis Boyd is pro-fire dept,” said Rowe.

Rowe, Boyd, and other community members worked on the grant application and submitted it hoping for the best.

Their hard work paid off, and the Rural Development Commission awarded the maximum amount of \$15,000 to the Western Greene County Fire Department. Funds will allow the new building to house trucks, offices and a training room.

“It will be put to good use. I guarantee you,” said Rowe. The residents of Western Greene County shouldn’t expect anything less.

Spot Light on the Van Buren County Fair Association

The Van Buren County Fair Association received a \$4,000 County Fair Building Grant in 2005 to enlarge their existing fair office building by twelve feet. The addition has allowed space for a mini kitchen, a bathroom with shower, an eating area, a storage space, and a small meeting space. Fair Manager Corrine Weatherly wrote in their application, "Fair officers spend 18 or more hours per day on the fair grounds during fair week. With no bath or eating facilities in the office, it does become necessary to shut down the office to fill these needs."

Assistant Fair Manager Calvin Graham and his wife Velores delivered the application filled with support letters from community members and county and state officials such as Judge Robert Bramlett, State Representative Stan Berry, and Senator Bob Johnson.

The Van Buren County Fair Association provided us with excellent before and after pictures of their project, and we would like to share some of them with you. We are very proud of their accomplishments and feel lucky enough to witness first hand the many successes of rural Arkansans.



BEFORE
Front of Office Building



AFTER
Front of Office Building



BEFORE
Desk Area



AFTER
Desk Area

DEPARTMENT OF RURAL SERVICES

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“Striving to Enhance the Quality of Life in Rural Arkansas”

Fundraising Ideas

- Auction services of people and businesses - anything from handy-man work to dinner for two.
- Host a huge garage sale. Ask everyone you know for unwanted belongings and hold a sale.
- Put out donation jars at local banks and convenience stores.
- Sell birthday parties at the fire station. Children can sit in apparatus, put on bunker gear and have picture taken etc.
- Publish and sell a community recipe book. Have local businesses purchase advertising space to cover production cost.
- Sent out a press release to local papers to get the word out to ask the community to help. Then set a goal thermometer in a prominent place to record fundraising efforts.