

by the Forest Service in preparing the final EIS. The final EIS is scheduled to be completed in July 2004. The Responsible Official, John Borton, District Ranger, will review the analysis contained in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to determine if the special use permits should be reissued and under what terms and conditions. The responsible official will consider comments, responses, environmental consequences discussed in the final EIS and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making this decision and will document the decision and rationale in the Record of Decision. The decision will be subject to Forest Service Appeal Regulations (36 CFR part 215).

Dated: August 26, 2003.

**John Borton,**

*District Ranger.*

[FR Doc. 03-22491 Filed 9-3-03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410-11-M**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Business-Cooperative Service

#### Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) Inviting Applications for the Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grant Program (VADG) (Independent Producers)

**AGENCY:** Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) announces the availability of \$27.7 million in competitive grant funds for fiscal year 2003 to help independent agricultural producers enter into value-added activities. RBS hereby requests proposals from eligible independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer or rancher cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures interested in a competitively awarded grant to fund one of the following two activities: (1) Developing feasibility studies or business plans (including marketing plans or other planning activities) needed to establish a viable value-added marketing opportunity for an agricultural product; or (2) acquiring working capital to operate a value-added business venture or an alliance that will allow the producers to better compete in domestic and international markets. In order to provide program benefits to as many eligible applicants as possible, applications can only be for one or the other of these two activities, but not both. Value-added products are

defined as follows: (1) A change in the physical state or form of the product (such as milling wheat into flour or making strawberries into jam); (2) the production of a product in a manner that enhances its value, as demonstrated through a business plan (such as organically produced products); (3) the physical segregation of an agricultural commodity or product in a manner that results in the enhancement of the value of that commodity or product (such as an identity preserved marketing system). As a result of the change in physical state or the manner in which the agricultural commodity or product is produced or segregated, the customer base for the commodity or product is expanded and a greater portion of revenue derived from the marketing, processing, or physical segregation is made available to the producer of the commodity or product. Value-added also includes using any agricultural product or commodity to produce renewable energy on a farm or ranch.

The maximum award per grant is \$500,000. In order to maximize the distribution of program benefits, smaller grant requests under \$500,000 will receive priority points. Priority is also being given to projects producing energy from biomass or demonstrating profitable use of innovative technologies.

**DATES:** Applications must be completed and submitted to the appropriate State USDA Rural Development office as soon as possible, but no later than 4 p.m. on October 20, 2003. Applications received after October 20, 2003, will not be considered. Late applications will not be accepted and will be returned to the applicant. Applicants must ensure that the service they use to deliver their applications can do so by the deadline. Due to recent security concerns, packages sent to the agency by mail have been delayed several days or even weeks.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit proposals and other required materials to your State USDA Rural Development Office. RBS is strongly encouraging the electronic submission of proposals. If proposals are electronically submitted, signed paper copies of the three required forms, SF-424 "Application for Federal Assistance," SF-424A "Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs," and SF-424B "Assurances—Non-Construction Programs," need to be mailed or faxed to the State office. A list of Rural Development State Offices, addresses, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers follows.

**Note:** Telephone numbers listed are not toll free.

## U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development State Offices

### Alabama

Chris Harmon, USDA Rural Development, Sterling Center, Suite 601, 4121 Carmichael Road, Montgomery, AL 36106-3683, (334) 279-3415, [chris.harmon@al.usda.gov](mailto:chris.harmon@al.usda.gov).

### Alaska

Dean Stewart, USDA Rural Development, 800 West Evergreen, Suite 201, Palmer, AK 99645, (907) 761-7722, [dstewart@rdmail.rural.usda.gov](mailto:dstewart@rdmail.rural.usda.gov).

### Arizona

Gary Mack, USDA Rural Development, 3003 North Central Avenue, Suite 900, Phoenix, AZ 85012, (602) 280-8717, [gary.mack@az.usda.gov](mailto:gary.mack@az.usda.gov).

### Arkansas

Tim Smith, USDA Rural Development, 700 West Capitol Avenue, Room 3416, Little Rock, AR 72201-3225, (501) 301-3200, [tim.smith@ar.usda.gov](mailto:tim.smith@ar.usda.gov).

### California

Karen Spatz, USDA Rural Development, 430 G Street, Agency 4169, Davis, CA 95616, (530) 792-5829, [karen.spatz@ca.usda.gov](mailto:karen.spatz@ca.usda.gov).

### Colorado

Leroy W. Cruz, USDA Rural Development, 655 Parfet Street, Lakewood, CO 80215, (720) 544-2926, [leroy.cruz@co.usda.gov](mailto:leroy.cruz@co.usda.gov).

### Delaware-Maryland

James E. Waters, USDA Rural Development, 4607 South DuPont Highway, Camden, DE 19934, (302) 697-4324, [jim.waters@de.usda.gov](mailto:jim.waters@de.usda.gov).

### Florida/Virgin Islands

Joe Mueller, USDA Rural Development, 4440 NW 25th Place, Gainesville, FL 32606, (352) 338-3482, [joe.mueller@fl.usda.gov](mailto:joe.mueller@fl.usda.gov).

### Georgia

J. Craig Scroggs, USDA Rural Development, 333 Phillips Drive, McDonough, GA 30253, (678) 583-0866, [craig.scroggs@ga.usda.gov](mailto:craig.scroggs@ga.usda.gov).

### Hawaii

Timothy O'Connell, USDA Rural Development, Federal Building, Room 311, 154 Wai'anuenue Avenue, Hilo, HI 96720, (808) 933-8313, [tim.oconnell@hi.usda.gov](mailto:tim.oconnell@hi.usda.gov).

### Idaho

Dale Lish, USDA Rural Development, 9173 West Barnes Drive, Suite A1,