

USDA: Rural Development Direct Water & Waste Disposal Program "A Look Back on FY06 and Going Forward in FY07"

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Not surprisingly, Fiscal Year 2006 was one of the most challenging for USDA Rural Development Direct Water & Waste Disposal Program, our partners and our customers. Higher material costs for concrete, steel, copper, etc., and the general cost of doing business directly affected project affordability and sustainability. We also found that applications were more complex to develop due to funding timeframes, the need (at times) for special district formation, and with the various issues that arose with the many partners involved in the process. Other factors include: decreased grant allocation; perceived utility value/facility value by the applicant/customer; and increased technical assistance required to move the applications forward.

However, in spite of these issues, our Community Programs Division had a very successful year primarily due to the exceptional teamwork exhibited by our staff, partners, and you—the customer. This team effort resulted in the following achievements:

Direct Water & Waste Disposal Program (New York State)

- Ranked No. 2 in the Nation for Grant Project Volume.
- Ranked No. 3 in the Nation for Loan Project Volume.
- Leveraged Over 62% of our Allocation (No. 1 in the Nation).
- Loan/Grant Ratio: Loan = 67%; Grant = 33% (meeting goal).
- Delinquency Loan Rate = 0%
- Graduated 10 Borrowers to Other Financing (Goal = 6 Borrowers)
- Served over 26,000 Equivalent Dwelling Units.

Thanks go out to all the aforementioned team for the

support and assistance given enabling us to meet and exceed our goals.

And now.....GOING FORWARD

I don't have to tell you that the cost of water is rising. The NUS Consulting Group conducted its annual survey and reported that water costs in the United States climbed by 4.4 percent for the period of July 1, 2005 to July 1, 2006. Cost averaged \$6.29 per thousand gallons including related sewer costs. The cost of water in Albany, New York, rose 14.6 percent. We also know that year after year, water rates in the United States will continue to rise as the cost of infrastructure upgrades and repairs increase.

As we move forward in Fiscal Year 2007, we currently find ourselves subject to a Continuing Resolution that funds our programs at the FY06 level. This may be in place for the entire FY07.

With increased demand for limited funding, we must continue to work closely as a team to meet your water needs. The NY Rural Water Association will continue playing a key role in making those needs known to your elected representatives and advancing the tools needed to make project development even more effective. Asset management, leadership capacity building, and assisting with Emergency Response Planning and Vulnerability Assessments are just a few ways your association can assist with the success of our program. We, at USDA Rural Development, will also continue to develop ways to better serve your changing financial and technical needs.

As always, I invite you to personally contact me at (315) 477-6427 or by email at david.miller@ny.usda.gov with your questions or comments. ♠

Water Professionals Wanted!

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) is looking for engineers interested in a professional career in the field of public health and environmental protection. Openings for these positions are often available in the Bureau of Water Supply Protection in Troy, NY and may also occur at any one of more than a dozen offices located statewide.

The NYSDOH uses the Sanitary Engineer title series to fill these positions. The Sanitary Engineer title includes an assistant level (salary grade 20) and senior level (grade 24). Assistant Sanitary Engineers currently start at an annual salary of \$49,192; Senior Sanitary Engineers currently start at \$60,717.

Both of these titles are competitive, continuously recruited civil service positions and applicants are encouraged to apply at any time. There is no written test for these titles, but if you meet the minimum qualifications, your education and experience will be evaluated against the general background/critical activities of the position to develop a score and rank you on a list. This evaluation will concentrate on the appropriateness and breath of relevant education and experience. More information on qualifications, typical duties, salary scales and the application process for these titles is available online at: http://www.es.state.ny.us/announ/cr_announcements/20-280.htm

The NYSDOH also hires entry level engineers at a salary grade 15. The NYSDOH uses the combined Environmental Engineer and Junior Sanitary Engineer title to fill this position. More information on qualifications, typical duties, salary and the application process for the entry level title is available at: http://www.es.state.ny.us/announ/cr_announcements/20-808.htm

If you have any questions on employment with the Department of Health, or would like more information on the application process, please contact:

New York State Department of Health • (518) 402-7650

Bureau of Personnel Management, Room 2217 • Corning Tower, Empire State Plaza • Albany, NY 12237