

New Predevelopment Planning Initiative

for Rural communities of less than 2500 population

by David A. Miller, P.E.
*Community Programs Director,
USDA- Rural Development, NYS*

Section 6001 “Water, Waste Disposed and Wastewater Facility Grants” authorized by the “Farm Bill” will lead to the implementation of the “SEARCH” Grant program in Fiscal Year 2011. The “Special Evaluation Assistance for Rural Communities and Households is to be known as the “SEARCH Grants” program.

USDA Rural Development is expected to have authority to make predevelopment planning grants for feasibility studies, design assistance, and technical assistance, to financially distressed communities in rural areas with populations of 2,500 or fewer inhabitants for water and waste disposal projects.

Regulations to enable the SEARCH GRANT to be implemented are expected to be issued by October 1, 2010.

It is expected that this grant program will require the lowest amount of documentation practicable.

Notwithstanding any other requirements, SEARCH GRANTS can be funded up to 100 percent of the eligible costs (as compared to our current maximum limit of 75%)

The “SEARCH GRANTS” program will be in addition to our “Predevelopment Planning Grant (PPG) program” that

assists applicants in paying costs associated with developing a complete application for a proposed project.

The “SEARCH” Grant program will be targeted to the most rural communities in the State. I expect to have much more detail in the near future which I will share with your NY Rural Water Association.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with your questions/comments regarding USDA-Rural Development program at 315-477-6427 or e-mail david.miller@ny.usda.gov