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Rural Development, Public Affairs

ART CENTER TO RECEIVE \$30,000 USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

UNITY, March 30- USDA Rural Development will present FUTURE MSAD 3 with a Community Facilities Grant in the amount of \$30,000 for the purchase of theatrical lighting and sound system equipment for the planned performing arts center in the new Mount View School in Thorndike. This federal grant brings FUTURE MSAD 3 within just \$90,000 of the overall campaign goal.

USDA Rural Development State Director Michael W. Aube said, "The new Performing Arts Center will bring great joy to the students who use it, and pride to the surrounding communities. USDA Rural Development is pleased to be a part of this important effort."

FUTURE MSAD 3 board chairman Steve Bennett acknowledged the significance of the \$30,000 Community Facilities Grant. "We have come so far since May 31, 2006 when we launched this effort," Bennett said, "and to receive this Community Facilities Grant from USDA Rural Development is tremendous. We're grateful to have this support, which will benefit thousands of people of all ages in our district," Bennett added.

FUTURE MSAD 3 is a non-profit organization run by board of 16 community volunteers. Their mission is to raise funds to enhance particular areas in the new Mount View School complex not covered by state funding. The \$575,000 capital campaign for Mount View's new 300-seat Performing Arts Center will provide a high-caliber performance space for all of the district's students.

Mount View students have used the existing cafeteria as a performing arts venue for the past 40 years. The state will fund a basic auditorium in the new Mount View school serving more than 1,000 students in grades Pre-K through 12. Auditorium enhancements to be funded by the private fundraising campaign include the sound and lighting systems, the electrical infrastructure, acoustics, a catwalk, mezzanine and control booth.

When constructed as part of the new school complex, the 300-seat performing arts center located adjacent to the high school lobby will provide a high-caliber performance space for all SAD 3 students, and will enhance the development of student theatre programs in the elementary, middle, and high school.

USDA Rural Development's community programs assist community facilities in rural areas. Through these programs, assistance is provided to facilities such as libraries, schools, and First Responders (ambulances services and hospitals), using a variety of programs that assist in funding, construction, operating costs, repairs, and equipment.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in rural communities. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development has invested over \$76 billion since the beginning of the Bush Administration to provide equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. About 1.5 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments.

Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/me>.