

# RURAL AMERICA RELIES ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT



NATIONAL  
RURAL WATER  
ASSOCIATION



USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER PROGRAMS DRIVE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

## ECONOMIC VITALITY FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Critical infrastructure, including adequate water service, is a basic requirement for a healthy economy, encourages employment opportunities and makes a community a desired place to live and work. The nearly 45,000 water systems in rural America are anchor institutions in their communities.

In many rural communities water infrastructure is past its useful life. Without adequate water and sanitation services, businesses move out of our rural communities, forcing the next generation to leave to find better opportunities. Those left behind are robbed of hope for a prosperous future.

Rural America's economy is driven by entrepreneurship, and made of a diverse range of operations through over 700,000 businesses. Rural areas produce most of the food we consume, provide lumber and other forest products used to build our homes and furniture, and supply the energy we consume daily.

*Rural economies are deeply connected to their urban counterparts*

USDA RD WEP not only provides essential services to the families that live in rural America, but also all business activities. These include small businesses, farming, manufacturing, emergency services, and more. In rural America, nearly 85% of all business establishments are small. These small businesses are critical to local economies, employing 54% of workers in their communities. Rural communities need access to funding through USDA RD WEP to thrive.

*Today's Congressional policies and funding decisions are jeopardizing the economic vitality of every community in rural America. Budget cuts will leave USDA WEP unable to accomplish its mission. WEP is instrumental in helping rural America increase economic opportunities for all rural people.*



Rural Development

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

PROMOTION BY THE NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

## USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS (WEP)

In 2023, USDA RD WEP funded over \$1.7 billion in projects to small and rural communities.

The average median household income for communities that received WEP funding was \$37,029, half of the national average household income of \$74,580.

In 2023, 308 WEP projects addressed health and sanitary challenges and 28,326 new connections provided drinking water to residents for the first time, resulting in over 400,000 individuals and households benefiting from this funding.

**TELL CONGRESS NOW**

**KEEP RURAL AMERICA STRONG!**

Scan the QR Code to learn more about how you can help keep Rural America Strong!



# THE IMPACT



WEP PROVIDES WELL SITES, REPLACEMENT LINES FOR KALEVA, MICHIGAN

## RURAL AMERICA DESERVES RURAL DEVELOPMENT

“ Without the grant from USDA RD, we would be exactly where we were. And that’s where we were 30 years ago. The customers aren’t able to pay higher rates easily. This system hadn’t been updated in so long and this was a lifesaver for it. For small rural villages to update their water systems and have good, reliable drinking water for all their citizens, the only way possible is through USDA RD funding.”

- Mike Hamilton, Kaleva Water System Operator



## IMPACT IN ACTION

The Village of Kaleva faces challenges common to many small towns, particularly regarding its water system.

With just over 30 local businesses, ranging from museums, grocery stores, restaurants, barber shops and salons, to automotive and industry, water is vital for the livelihood of all citizens in the village.

In recent years, Kaleva has confronted issues stemming from aging infrastructure, water quality anxieties, and financial constraints. Kaleva pursued a comprehensive approach to address its water challenges. This strategy encompassed infrastructure upgrades, refinement of water treatment procedures, and the implementation of protective measures for water sources.

Kaleva’s endeavors were supported by \$3.6 million in funding from USDA RD.

System upgrades include the replacement of 2,950 feet of 8-inch asbestos-cement pipeline, along with 1,100 feet of 4-inch and 350 feet of 2-inch pipeline. Additionally, the village has installed 1,300 feet of new 8-inch pipeline, expanding its distribution network. Kaleva has secured its water supply by drilling two artesian wells. The project installed 300 new meters, replaced two old hydrants, and installed five new ones, bolstering emergency response efforts.

## CALL TO ACTION

### Fund Water Infrastructure - Stand Up for USDA Rural Development

Rural Development will continue to play a vital role in modernizing, preserving, and protecting rural America’s infrastructure and public health. You can help secure its future today by signing the pledge and writing to your Congressional representatives today.

Providing adequate support and resources necessary to protect and enhance the environment, public health, sustainability of utilities, and economic vitality of rural America with clean, affordable, and safe water service is a primary responsibility for our federal elected officials.

Visit [www.ruralwaterstrong.org](http://www.ruralwaterstrong.org) to learn more.

VILLAGE OF KALEVA, MI  
POPULATION | 400  
BUSINESSES | 30