

Clinch-Powell One of 20 Rural Enterprise Communities

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The Clinch-Powell Enterprise Community was named as one of 20 Enterprise Communities across the US by Vice President Al Gore on January 13, 1999. This award made to the Clinch-Powell RC&D Council is the culmination of a six month planning effort which will bring flexible EC grants (projected to be \$2.5 million over 10 years), earmarked grants and loans from Rural Development, tax credits, special consideration for other federal grants and other benefits.

Funding will be used to tackle issues of concern identified in a public participation process which included 1,314 residents in the region. Based on this grassroots input, a ten year strategic plan was developed by a 16 member steering committee of community residents.

The Enterprise Community includes all or portions of Claiborne, Grainger, Hancock, Hawkins and Union Counties based on poverty data from the 1990 U.S. Census.

A press conference was held Thursday, January 21 at Springdale Elementary School in Claiborne County. David Seivers, USDA Rural Development State Director, our Congressional Staff, the EC Steering Committee and community leaders were on hand to answer questions.

Clinch-Powell Enterprise Community

Lead Entity: Clinch-Powell Resource Conservation & Development Council.

Demographics: Counties: Claiborne, Grainger, Hancock, Union. Community population: 28,268. Poverty Rate: 31%. Net Land Area: 677.4 square miles. Congressional Representative: William L. Jenkins, R-1; Van Hilleary R-4

Background: Round 1 Champion Community. The percentage of house in the Zone that have indoor plumbing is less than the surrounding counties as a whole, the state and the nation. The per capita income for the Zone counties is 42% below the national and 35% below the State per capita income.

Community Overview: Clinch-Powell is an area with a rich history that has gone through many economic changes through the years. Clinch-Powell represents a dispersed community with nine of the eleven census tracts having a lower population per square mile than the national average and ten of the census tracts having a lower population density than the state average. This sparse population density is one of the underlying reasons for the lack of adequate public services and employment opportunities in the Zone.

Strategic Plan: Clinch-Powell RC&D response is to implement programs and projects to help build foundations for strong, clean and healthy communities, while empowering citizens to help themselves and tackle challenges through critical education, demonstrated leadership, meaningful volunteer service and dedicated action.

• **Economic Development** -creation of a community development corporation for the Zone, establishment of several capital funds for business expansion and development, charter a regional Chamber of Commerce.

- **Education** – construction of a regional technical training center and the enhancement of vocational training in existing high schools, renovation and upgrading of school libraries, telecommunications and distance learning centers.
 - **Community Development** – construction of a mountain cultural center, establishment of community centers for social activities, recreation and education, creation of structured youth programs.
 - **Health/Social Services** –development of healthcare systems in the Zone that are self-supporting and include wellness as well as medical care, emergency services will be enhanced along with the establishment of 24-hour health care clinics, creation of health and wellness program in community centers.
 - **Employment/Job Training** – continually surveying and coordination of job needs of area employers, creation of expansion of adult education in all counties, improvement of vocational education in all high schools, development of an apprenticeship program, promote successful marketing of local arts and crafts.
 - **Infrastructure** - providing all residents with safe and ample drinking water and approved sewage disposal; establishing the First Wheels Program to supply transportation to welfare recipients and others with special needs to facilitate moving into the workforce, establishing a comprehensive and high quality emergency services in the Zone to include 911, EMS, Rescue Squad, Fire, Ambulance and Police.
- Partnerships:** The Clinch-Powell list of partners consists of 63 organizations which include Federal Agencies, colleges and universities, banks, private business, foundations, local governments and community volunteer groups.
- Leveraging:** Some leveraging components of the strategic plan include the creation of three new chapters of Habitat for Humanity, connecting with The Nature Conservancy for protecting and repairing the natural resource base, and the Union County Solid Waste Authority for the creation of a solid waste management system which aids the region.
- Community Involvement:** Building on the excellence of community participation involved in the development of strategic plan, Clinch-Powell has outlined a strategy of not only keeping citizens informed, but also to keep citizens engaged throughout the implementation process.