



FINAL ECONOMIC STIMULUS LAW INCLUDES 502, NSP, AND OTHER HOUSING FUNDS. On February 17, President Barack Obama signed into law H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Revitalization Act of 2009. The final bill provides \$1 billion for USDA direct Section 502 loans and \$10.472 billion for Section 502 guaranteed loans, \$510 million for

Native American housing block grants, \$4 billion for public housing, \$1 billion for CDBG, \$2 billion for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, and more, as well as funding for rural community facilities, business, and water/wastewater programs. It also requires that at least 10% of the spending for each of the RD community facilities, business, and water/waste programs included in the bill must be allocated to persistent poverty counties (those with poverty rates of 20% or more in the 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial censuses). (This does not apply to Sec. 502 funding.) Details are available at http://www.ruralhome.org/infoAnnouncements_2009EconRecovery.php.

CFED OFFERS FUNDS FOR INNOVATIONS IN MANUFACTURED HOMES (I'M HOME). To address barriers to asset building in the manufactured housing sector, funds are available for new and replacement development and for public policy activities. Concept papers are due March 20 and must be submitted online. For information, visit <http://www.cfed.org/go/imhome> or email questions to imhome@cfed.org.

COMMENTS SOUGHT ON CHANGES TO METROPOLITAN AND MICROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA STANDARDS. The Office of Management and Budget is considering recommendations from a review committee. Comments are due April 13. See *Federal Register*, 2/12/09 or www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/2009.aspx. Contact James D. Fitzsimmons, Census Bureau, 301-763-1465, pop.fr.notice@census.gov.

EFFECTIVE DATE DELAYED FOR NEW RD GUARANTEED LOAN PLATFORM. RD's uniform platform for community facility, water and waste disposal, business and industry, and rural energy guaranteed loans (see *HAC News*, 1/7/09) is delayed until March 9, and RD requests comment on whether to delay the rule to June 1. Comments are due February 20. See *Federal Register*, 2/13/09 or <http://www.regulations.gov>. Contact Michael Foore, RD, Michael.Foore@wdc.usda.gov, 202-690-4730.

HAC OFFERS RURAL HOMELESSNESS CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS. Faith- and community-based organizations in rural areas may apply for up to \$15,000 in capacity building funds. Deadline is March 16. HAC is hosting an Audio-Web Conference on February 23, 2009 at 1:00 PM EST to advise participants on the application process. Visit <http://www.ruralhome.org/rhcbfinancehome.php>, call 1-877-842-RHCB, or email Darren Favello, HAC, darren@ruralhome.org.

HUD DELAYS EFFECTIVE DATE FOR TENANT INCOME VERIFICATION. Comments are due March 13 regarding the delay or other aspects of the rule published January 27, 2009 (see *HAC News*, 2/4/09). See *Federal Register*, 2/11/09 or <http://www.regulations.gov>. Contact Nicole Faison, HUD, 202-708-0744.

HOMEOWNERSHIP AND VACANCY RATES UNCHANGED FROM LATE 2007 TO LATE 2008. New Census Bureau data show that, when adjusted for seasonal variation, the national homeownership rate in the fourth quarter of 2008 (67.5%) was not significantly different from the rate in third quarter 2008 (67.7%) or in fourth quarter 2007 (67.8%). Vacancy rates and homeownership rates have fallen since 2004. In nonmetro areas, vacancy rates in both rental and homeownership units were statistically unchanged over the year. Homeownership rates were statistically unchanged from fourth quarter 2007 to fourth quarter 2008 in the U.S. as a whole (67.5%) and in nonmetro places (75.4%). Visit www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/hvs/qtr408/q408ind.html.

COUNTIES' GREEN INITIATIVES COLLECTED IN ONLINE DATABASE. The National Association of Counties has launched a searchable database of U.S. counties' pro-environment and energy-efficient practices, policies, and programs. Users can search by keyword, state, county size, type of document or issue. Visit <http://www.naco.org>, click "Learn About Counties" and then "Counties Go Green."

RURAL POVERTY DATA ON FOUNDATION WEBSITE. Spotlight on Poverty, a site launched by several major foundations, includes research on rural poverty as well as relevant news and commentaries in major media. Visit http://spotlightonpoverty.org/rural_poverty.aspx.

CIVIL RIGHTS IN LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT PROGRAM STUDIED. A review of Qualified Allocation Plans in all 50 states discusses LIHTC program features that can promote new housing opportunities for families and help states meet their obligation to affirmatively further fair housing. *Building Opportunity: Civil Rights Best Practices in the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program* is available from the Poverty and Race Research Action Council at <http://www.prrac.org/LIHTC.php>.