



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
November 30, 2005

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### THREE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS AWARDED

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Through the Ethyl Grant program, the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) recently awarded a total of \$6,500 in community development grants to projects located in Iowa, Oregon and Virginia. This program provides funds to worthy community development projects that are located in areas served by local telephone companies that are members of the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). Grants are distributed twice a year in October and May.

The first project to receive funding was nominated by WTC Communications in Wilton, Ia. The Wilton Library and Community Center will use the \$1,900 grant towards building a new library and community center. The library and community center is expected to improve the quality of life and add a variety of employment opportunities to the town of Wilton.

Mt. Angel Telephone, located in Mt. Angel, Ore., nominated the Benedictine Foundation of Oregon. The \$2,300 Ethyl Grant as well as matching funds from the telephone company and a benefit dinner will be able to completely fund repair the walk-in freezer/cooler unit of the St. Joseph Shelter. The renovation will be able to continue providing food and shelter to those in the community who need it.

The final project to receive funding was nominated by Peoples Mutual Telephone Company in Grenta, Va. The Mt. Airy Elementary PTO will administer the \$2,500 grant. The PTO will use the Ethyl Grant to help purchase a new playground for the school so that students have a safe place to play during recess. Peoples Mutual Telephone Company will be matching the grant.

FRED is a 501 (c) (3) foundation, as determined by the IRS, affiliated with the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). For information about FRED or the Ethyl Grant program, go to [www.fred.org](http://www.fred.org). For more information about OPASTCO, go to [www.opastco.org](http://www.opastco.org).

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
October 13, 2005

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## EIGHT RURAL SCHOOLS RECEIVE TECHNOLOGY GRANTS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — With a generous contribution from Rural Telephone Finance Cooperative (RTFC), the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) awarded nearly \$75,000 in grants to rural public schools across the United States.

“RTFC is very proud to work in cooperation with FRED and OPASTCO telephone members to help these schools meet the growing need for innovative technology in the classroom,” said Ellen Classen, vice-president for marketing at RTFC. “Technology can be a powerful tool to improve learning in the classroom. Many rural public schools cannot utilize this tool to its full potential because of their limited resources.”

The grant program, now in its fifth year, awards funds to public schools that are working to increase the use of technology to enhance the learning experience. Of the more than fifty applications submitted, 8 schools were selected to receive funding. The technology grants ranged from \$6,105 to \$10,000. More than half a million dollars in funding was requested.

“Each year it is amazing to see the response to this program,” said Melissa Korzuch, FRED Director. “The work of the selection committee was extremely difficult because of the outstanding quality of the grant proposals.”

More information about the winning applicants and how to apply for next year’s program is available at [www.fred.org](http://www.fred.org). FRED is a charitable 501(c)(3) foundation that is affiliated with the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). More information about OPASTCO can be found at [www.opastco.org](http://www.opastco.org).

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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OPASTCO FAMILY REACHES OUT TO THOSE HIT BY KATRINA  
*\$83,459.96 Raised for Victims of the Disaster*

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- During times of crisis, family is more important than ever, providing support and helping each other through the tough times. The Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO) and its members responded to their families who were hit with devastation from Hurricane Katrina. OPASTCO members in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi, where Hurricane Katrina did the most damage, faced an unprecedented natural disaster and needed help. In response, OPASTCO and its affiliate 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED), teamed up to create a special Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Fund specifically to assist the OPASTCO telephone company employees whose lives have been devastated by the hurricane.

“OPASTCO is a family of hundreds of small telecommunications companies. In a family, when one member hurts, we all hurt,” says OPASTCO Board member Keith Oliver from Home Telephone Company in South Carolina. He continues, “The Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Fund was created so we can help provide assistance to individuals impacted by the destruction of Hurricane Katrina. Being there for each other in a time of need, it’s just what a family does.”

OPASTCO member companies and their employees supported their extended families by generously donating to this campaign which ran through October 14, 2005. A total of \$83,459.96 was raised; one hundred percent of the donations received through this campaign will be donated to OPASTCO telephone company employees in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi who are unable to rebuild their lives using the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), insurance, and other traditional means.

OPASTCO represents more than 560 small, independently owned, local telecommunications companies serving primarily rural areas of the United States and Canada. OPASTCO membership includes both commercial companies and cooperatives, which range in size from fewer than 100 to 100,000 access lines, and collectively serve more than 3.5 million customers. OPASTCO represents rural telecommunications interests before federal regulatory bodies and Congress, provides publications, and holds two conventions annually in January and July of each year, addressing the needs of the small telecommunications industry. Visit the OPASTCO Web site at [www.opastco.org](http://www.opastco.org). The association has an affiliate 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED). Visit the FRED Web site at [www.fred.org](http://www.fred.org).

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
July 14, 2005

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## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS AWARDED

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Through the Ethyl Grant program, the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) recently awarded a total of \$8,000 in community development grants to projects located in Minnesota, Missouri, Iowa and Kansas. This program provides funds to worthy community development projects that are located in areas served by local telephone companies that are members of the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). Grants are distributed twice a year in October and May.

The first project to receive funding was nominated by Minnesota Valley Telephone Company in Franklin, Minn. The Franklin Lions Club will use the \$2,250 grant towards renovating the restrooms of the community shelter at the City's public park. The renovation will be completely funded by the Ethyl Grant and the matching funds from the Franklin Lions Club, the city and Minnesota Valley Telephone Company.

Otelco, Inc –Mid-Missouri, located in Pilot Grove, Mo., and the Mid-Missouri Mission Team are working to paint homes as well as wash houses, remove debris of a demolished home, clear trash, brush and junk cars in the community of Fortuna. The \$2,500 Ethyl Grant as well as matching funds from the telephone company will partially cover the \$17,450 total expenditures for the project.

The third project to receive an Ethyl Grant in this round of awards is located in Keosauqua, Ia. Nominated by Van Buren Telephone Company, the grant of \$750 will partially fund a project to upgrade the local community Little League baseball/softball field. Matching funds will be provided by the local telephone company as well as the local school district.

The final project to receive funding was nominated by Wamego Telephone Company, Inc. in Wamego Kans. The Pottawatomie Wabaunsee Regional Library will administer the \$2,500 grant. The library will use the Ethyl Grant to help purchase four microfilm readers/printers for their branch locations. The matching funds have been raised by each of the local branch fundraisers.

FRED is a 501 (c) (3) foundation, as determined by the IRS, affiliated with the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). For information about FRED or the Ethyl Grant program, go to [www.fred.org](http://www.fred.org). For more information about OPASTCO, go to [www.opastco.org](http://www.opastco.org).

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Date: June 1, 2005

### RURAL KANSAS TEACHER HONORED BY FRED

(Washington, D.C.) – Verlyn Lee Weis of Salina, Kansas, was selected to be the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) 2005 Rural Teacher of the Year, through the nomination of Wilson Telephone Company. This award is designed to recognize innovative approaches to teaching in rural areas, particularly through the use of telecommunications technology. The recipient is meant to represent the many excellent teachers throughout rural America. As a part of the award program, a \$5,000 grant will be awarded to the recipient's school system for technology upgrades and expansions. The program, including the grant, is sponsored by a donation from Nortel Networks.

A letter of recommendation from a former student highlights the impact of having Mr. Weis as a teacher, "I have never had a teacher care for me as much as Mr. Weis. He pulled me to the side my freshman year and told me how much potential I had, and that I was able to do anything to which I set my mind. Fourteen years later, I remember that talk like it was yesterday. He impacted my life that day as he has many others. His ability to inspire students like me to continue to study and work hard is phenomenal."

Mr. Weis is the Agriculture/Biology Instructor and Future Farmers of America (FFA) Advisor at Ell-Saline High School in Brookville, Kansas. This year marks Mr. Weis' 20th year in education. He has demonstrated his passion for educating children and his devotion to rural living through development of an educational program, 'Day at the Farm'. The program brings children from metropolitan areas to a local community farm to learn about agriculture, food, and rural America.

A portion of the funds from the grant will be used to purchase a technology studio. The studio will be used to teach students many classroom lessons ranging from current events to oral communications. Students will be able to act as television reporters and anchors to broadcast news programs to the school and possibly out to the surrounding communities. This project will benefit the students and the community by advancing classroom technology and also provide the attention toward critical skills needed in the job market.

FRED is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that is affiliated with the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). Additional information about FRED and the Rural Teacher of the Year Award is available at [www.fred.org](http://www.fred.org).

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **\$58,000 awarded to FRED Scholars**

(Washington, D.C.) – The Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) awarded \$58,000 in scholarships to some of the most outstanding students rural America has to offer. The volunteer selection committee reviewed almost 300 applications that were nominated by more than 90 rural, independent telecommunications companies and cooperatives.

The scholarships awarded range from \$1,000 to \$5,000. The 51 scholarship recipients hail from 25 different states and provinces in the United States and Canada. The scholarship recipients are among the top of their classes and active in extracurricular activities.

“It seems that each year the selection committee’s task gets more and more difficult,” Foundation Director, Melissa Korzuch, said. “This year, we awarded \$58,000 total in scholarships, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of the OPASTCO Member companies that support the scholarship program with their donations to the Foundation.” This year marks the first year that no FRED scholarship awarded was under \$1,000.

For the third year, the “Everette Kneece Return to Rural America Scholarship” was awarded in the amount of \$5,000. Along with a strong academic record and extensive involvement in extracurricular activities, the recipient is required to demonstrate a strong desire to return to a rural area in the United States or Canada after completing his or her studies. This year’s recipient is Veronica Alvarado from Ulysses, Kan. Veronica was nominated by Pioneer Communications.

FRED is a national 501(c)(3) charitable foundation located in Washington, D.C., and was founded in 1989 by the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO). The mission of FRED and its supporters is to promote educational, social and economic development in rural America and Canada. The FRED Scholarship Program is made possible through the generosity of more than 1,000 small, independent telecommunications companies operating in rural areas across the United States and Canada and the companies that provide goods and services to these companies. Only OPASTCO member companies are eligible to nominate a student.

“Small telephone companies are a significant asset to their rural communities. Our goal is to work with all OPASTCO members to create educational opportunities for rural America’s best resource—its young people,” FRED President Dan Hatzenbuehler said.

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