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### News Release

Release No. 0167.15

Contact:

Weldon Freeman (202) 690-1384

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### USDA Invests in Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Projects in Wyoming

**Grants will promote energy independence, create jobs and advance the use of renewable fuels**

JACKSON, Wyo. June 10, 2015 – During his visit to the state today, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that USDA is investing in several energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in Wyoming.

"Energy costs can consume a large part of a business's budget," Vilsack said. "I am pleased that USDA's Rural Energy for America Program is helping farmers, ranchers and rural small business owners here in Wyoming save thousands of dollars in energy costs each year. This assistance from USDA helps businesses develop renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements."

Vilsack made the announcement during a visit here to the Snake River Brewing Company. It is receiving a \$13,810 USDA Rural Development [Rural Energy for America Program](#) (REAP) grant to install a solar panel. When operational, this renewable energy project will generate more than 21,000 kilowatt hours of electricity annually and reduce the use of traditional fossil-based fuels. It also is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 21.6 metric tons in carbon dioxide equivalence.

The local brewpub was established in 2007. It is located in the heart of the Teton Mountain Range and employs more than 100 people.

Wyoming rancher Byron F. Oedekoven is receiving two REAP grants. He will use one – a \$5,825 grant – to make energy efficiency improvements to offset the costs of lighting upgrades for shops and barns used in his ranching business. Oedekoven is also receiving a \$17,681 grant to transition from propane to geothermal energy. The switch from fossil fuels will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce his energy costs.

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## Media Contact

Phone: (202) 720-4623

Fax: (202) 720-5402

REAP was created by the 2002 Farm Bill and was reauthorized by the 2014 Farm Bill. REAP funding has helped farmers expand renewable energy use in recent years. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, 57,299 farms reported using a renewable energy producing system in 2012. That's more than double the 23,451 operations that reported the same in 2007. Solar panels accounted for 63 percent of renewable energy producing systems on farms, with 36,331 farms reporting their use. Farmers and ranchers continue to lead the charge toward a more sustainable energy future.

Since 2009, USDA has awarded \$448,163 for 19 REAP projects in Wyoming.

Eligible agricultural producers and rural small businesses may use REAP funds to make energy efficiency improvements or install renewable energy systems, including solar, wind, renewable biomass (including anaerobic digesters), small hydroelectric, ocean energy, hydrogen and geothermal.

President Obama's historic investments in rural America have made our rural communities stronger. Under his leadership, these investments in housing, community facilities, businesses and infrastructure have empowered rural America to continue leading the way – strengthening America's economy, small towns and rural communities.

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