



Committed to the future of rural communities.

Utah—Rural Housing Service—Creating great places to live, raise families and build strong partnerships is important to our efforts at USDA. .

Community Building and Strategic Partners

USDA Funds Assist Partner in Constructing Straw Bale Homes

Outline of Need:

Many of Moab's lower income homeowners reside in neighborhoods consisting of older mobile homes on individual lots. Lenders will not finance improvements on the old, pre-HUD Code mobile homes. As a result the homes were deteriorating and residents had little hope of living in affordable homes that would be energy efficient, weatherproof and safe.

How Rural Development Helped:

The plan to replace the old trailers with energy efficient, straw bale structures needed funding, that's when USDA Rural Development stepped in and offered a helping hand by providing the long-term financing for homeowners through the 502Direct Loan program. Without this partnership, this project would not have been possible.

The Results:

The plan is an innovative approach to developing affordable housing. The obsolete trailers are moved and recycled. The trailer owners are provided temporary housing during construction.

Fast Facts

Program: Single Family Direct Housing Loan
Investment: \$100,000 loan for a home appraised @ 170K
Congressional District 2, Congressman Jim Matheson
Senators: Orrin G. Hatch, Mike Lee
Partners: Community Volunteers, Student Interns, and Local Businesses
Rural Population—5500
Impact: • Present and future local job creation
• The decline of the mobile home neighborhood could not be reversed without USDA Rural Development investment that made it affordable for people to replace the old, deteriorating mobile homes.
• Revitalization catalyst and two more families applying for the program



Before and after picture of the first energy efficient straw bale home built by Community Rebuilds in Moab, Utah.

Construction labor is by student intern volunteers working under the guidance of a contractor and a respected expert in natural building processes (straw bale, adobe, earthen plaster and other locally available materials).

The first home completed by Community Rebuilds was a straw bale building constructed by student interns working under the supervision of a contractor and Danny Kaufmeyer, a recognized authority on natural building construction. Currently, Community Rebuilds is working with two additional families planning to replace their old mobile homes with new straw bale structures. The Moab neighborhoods where the old mobile homes are located consist of individual resident property owners. The Community Rebuilds program along with Rural Development maintain that by replacing the old mobile homes is improving the quality of the neighborhood by developing affordable attractive homes that fit nicely into the red rock environment surrounding Moab.

Community Rebuilds has ambitious plans to develop a community sustainability campus for training, demonstration projects and summer internships for students.

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