

Economic development forum held in Ft. Morgan

On Thursday, Oct. 13, U.S. Senator Wayne Allard's Office hosted a forum on Rural Economic Development at the Morgan County Community College in Ft. Morgan.

Following the forum, Agriculture Deputy Undersecretary for Rural Development Allan Johnson joined by Allard and Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave presented ceremonial checks totaling more than \$26 million in loan and grant funding to several Northeast Colorado entities, including \$24.5 million to finance construction of a new hospital in Yuma.

The Holyoke Fire Protection District received a \$25,000 Community Facilities Grant from USDA Rural Development. The funds will be used to purchase a first attack fire truck for the Amherst Station which is located within the Holyoke Fire Protection District. This equipment will allow firefighters to fight prairie fires more effectively.

In addition, three USDA Rural Development Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Grants of \$500,000 each were presented to EYC Cure Wind Farm, LLC; the EYC Helling Wind Farm, LLC; and the EYC Lenz Wind Farm, LLC.

The EYC Wind Group also re-

ceived a \$150,000 grant under USDA Rural Development's Value Added Program to operate a 10 Megawatt wind energy project which will be constructed by December 2005. In Fiscal Year 2004, the group also received a Value Added Agriculture Product Market Development Grant for \$128,000. from Rural Development.

The entity utilized the funding to prepare a feasibility study and business/marketing plan regarding developing a wind project on land in East Yuma County. The results showed that the wind resource is of high quality. All three entities expect to have construction complete within the next nine months and to be operational as early as the fall of 2006.

USDA, Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. Rural Development provides investment and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development and critical community and technology infrastructure.

Further information on rural programs is available at any of Colorado's eight local USDA Rural Development offices or by visiting the website at www.rurdev.usda.gov/co/index.htm.