



*King and Queen County*  
*Founded 1691 in Virginia*

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Good morning. My name is Ed Miller and I serve as Director of Economic Development for King and Queen County, Virginia. I would like to thank the Committee for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today. King and Queen County, located in the Middle Peninsula of Virginia, is a very rural farming community with a population of approximately 6,600 people. The County has no public water or sewer system and no broadband infrastructure. Because of the lack of public utilities and high speed internet, economic development and specifically business attraction is difficult to achieve. Also, economic development incentives from the State of Virginia are generally geared toward office headquarters or manufacturing projects with large capital investments and a large number of employees which generally do not look at rural areas like King and Queen. That is why the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and its Rural Development Programs are critical to economic development efforts in rural communities in Virginia.

We have been assisted in our efforts to help small “start-up” businesses by receiving a Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) from USDA. The Rappahannock Tribal Council, located in King and Queen County, received USDA funds for a market study to determine if a natural spring water bottling project on tribal property should proceed. Also, grant/loan funds from USDA have been obligated for a library building in King and Queen and we have requested grant/loan funds to upgrade kitchen equipment in our schools. Our regional public use airport, which is located in the County, has submitted an application to USDA for grant/loan funds for a hangar for its regional Life Evac helicopter. USDA rural development programs are very important to King and Queen County.

My experience with the administration of the Rural Development Programs has generally been favorable. However, the amount of information that a small “start-up” business is required to submit as part of the RBEG Revolving Loan application can be overwhelming. Also, it needs to be remembered that if these firms could get funding from a bank they would. The process and the requirements for the loan need to be simplified. Also, I do not understand why a local government has to submit its organizational documents, including its charter, as part of an application process. Finally, the ARRA reporting should be simplified.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee.