



**Oldies But Goodies Car Show!** It was a great day for old trucks as three of the top awards went to these classics. The City's Choice award went to Emmett Barthehemy with his 1955 Ford Pick Up (top right photo). Trust firemen to choose a red truck for their award! The Bronte Volunteer Fire Department's Choice was Frank Harvill's 1938 Ford Pick up (bottom right photo). The Kids Choice was the 1941 Ford Pick Up, owned by Joe Nandin of San Angelo.

**USDA Seeks Applications for Grants To Help Agricultural Producers Bring Increased Value to Their Products**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today invited agricultural producers to apply for grants to increase the value of their products.

"Producers can greatly enhance the bottom line of their businesses and improve their economic prospects when they improve the value of their products, thus expanding their markets and customer base," Vilsack said. "The Value Added Producer Grant program (VAPG) has a proven track record of doing just that and I am pleased to announce that we are inviting producers to apply for these grants by the deadline. The funds in this program enable America's farmers, ranchers and rural business owners to find ways to expand their product offerings, revenue streams and create more economic opportunity by bringing additional value to what they already produce."

"Investing in the creative ideas of innovative Texans will result in a positive step towards rural economic and community development," said Paco Valentin, Texas Rural Development State Director. "We are pleased to offer this opportunity to rural entrepreneurs and producers whose endeavors will increase the value of agricultural commodities and therefore promote job creation in their communities."

Applicants have until October 15, 2012 to apply. Vilsack emphasized that far too many producers are missing out on significant economic opportunities when their products are enhanced further away from the farm. "When our producers keep their value-added activities closer to the farm, it not only improves their bottom line; it strengthens our rural econ-

omy and strengthens our rural communities."

USDA Rural Development is making up to \$14 million in grants available for projects that help farmers and ranchers produce bio-based products from agricultural commodities. The grants, which are competitively awarded, are available for planning activities or for working capital expenses, but not for both. The maximum grant amount is \$100,000 for planning grants and \$300,000 for working capital grants. Generating new products, creating and expanding marketing opportunities and increasing producer income are the goals of the VAPG program.

Businesses of all sizes are encouraged to apply, but priority will be given to operators of small and medium-sized farms or ranches that are structured as family farms, beginning farmers or ranchers, or those owned by socially-disadvantaged farmers or ranchers. Grants are available for projects up to 36 months in duration.

For information on how to apply, see page 48951 of the August 15, 2012 Federal



Register, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-08-15/pdf/2012-20082.pdf>

USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, has an active portfolio of more than \$172 billion in

loans and loan guarantees. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities,

businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America.

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