

Development Division (CDD),  
Cooperative Services Program.

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received on or before May 8, 2000, to be assured of consideration.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** John Wells, Director, CDD, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA, Cooperative Development Division, STOP 3254, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-3254. Telephone: (202) 720-3350.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Title:* Cooperative Services Questionnaire: Market Potential for New Cooperatives Buyer Survey for New Cooperative Activity.

*OMB Number:* 0570-0009.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* May 31, 2000.

*Type of Request:* Extension of a currently approved information collection.

*Abstract:* The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) USDA, conducts feasibility studies to assist in the development of new cooperatives. The Cooperative Development Division specializes in technical assistance to agricultural and rural producer groups interested in organizing a cooperative, and to emerging or developing co-ops, so they can: (a) Use sensible economic judgment, (b) determine co-op feasibility, (c) meet an economic need, (d) successfully operate on sound business principles and, (e) increase member income. In order to carry out the Agency's mission, RBS needs to collect information from the cooperative community.

The authority to carry out RBS mission is defined in the Cooperative Marketing Act of 1926 (44 Stat. 802-1926).

**Authority and Duties of Division (7 U.S.C. 453)**

(a) The division shall render service to associations of producers of agricultural products, and federations and subsidiaries thereof, engaged in the cooperative marketing of agricultural products, including processing, warehousing, manufacturing, storage, the cooperative purchasing of farm supplies, credit, financing, insurance, and other cooperative activities.

(b) The division is authorized:

(1) To acquire, analyze and disseminate economic, statistical, and historical information regarding the progress, organization, and business methods of cooperative associations in the United States and foreign countries.

(2) To conduct studies of the economic, legal, financial, social, and other phases of cooperation, and

publish the results thereof. Such studies shall include the analyses of the organization, operation, financial and merchandising problems of cooperative associations.

(3) To make surveys and analyses if deemed advisable of the accounts and business practices of representative cooperative associations upon their request; to report to the association so surveyed to results thereof, and with the consent of the association so surveyed to publish summaries of the results of such surveys, together with similar facts, for the guidance of cooperative associations and for the purpose of assisting cooperative associations in developing methods of business and market analysis.

(4) To confer and advise with committees or groups of producers, if deemed advisable, that may be desirous of forming a cooperative association and to make an economic survey and analysis of the facts surrounding the production and marketing of the agricultural product or products which the association, if formed, would handle or market.

(5) To acquire from all available sources information concerning crop prospects, supply, demand, current receipts, exports, imports, and prices of the agricultural products handled or marketed by cooperative associations, and to employ qualified commodity marketing specialists to summarize and analyze this information and disseminate the same among cooperative associations, and others.

(6) To promote the knowledge of cooperative principles and practices and to cooperate, in promoting such knowledge, with educational and marketing agencies, cooperative associations, and others.

(7) To make such special studies, in the United States and foreign countries, and to acquire and disseminate such information and findings as may be useful in the development and practice of cooperation.

*Estimate of Burden:* Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .5 hours per response.

*Respondents:* Mainly buyers of agricultural products in domestic market areas proposed cooperatives would be expected to market their member's products.

*Estimated number of respondents:* 90.  
*Estimated number of responses per respondent:* 1.

*Estimated total annual burden on respondents:* 45 hours per year.

The Cooperative Development Division specializes in technical assistance to agricultural and rural

producer groups interested in organizing a cooperative, and to emerging or developing co-ops, so they can (a) use sensible economic judgment, (b) determine co-op feasibility, (c) meet an economic need, (d) successfully operate on sound business principles and, (e) increase member income.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Jean Mosley, Regulations and Paperwork Management Division, at (202) 692-0041.

*Comments:* Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to Jean Mosley, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, STOP 0742, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-0742. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Dated: February 25, 2000.

**Dayton J. Watkins,**

*Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.*

[FR Doc. 00-5426 Filed 3-6-00; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410-XY-U**

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**Rural Utilities Service**

**Information Collection Activity;  
Comment Request**

**AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended), the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) invites comments on this new information collection for which RUS intends to

request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by May 8, 2000.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** F. Lamont Heppe, Jr., Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., STOP 1522, Room 4036 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Telephone: (202) 720-9550. FAX: (202) 720-4120.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) regulation (5 CFR 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) requires that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies a new information collection that RUS is submitting to OMB for approval.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to: F. Lamont Heppe, Jr., Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 1522, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1522. FAX: (202) 720-4120.

*Title:* Customer Service for Rural Utilities Service Borrowers.

*Type of Request:* New collection approval.

*Abstract:* The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) makes mortgage loans and loan guarantees to electric and telecommunications systems to provide and improve electric and telecommunications service in rural areas pursuant to the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, as amended (7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*) (RE Act). In order to comply with E.O. 12862, "Setting Customer Service Standards," RUS intends to survey its electric and

telecommunications borrowers to determine the kind and quality of services customers want and the level of satisfaction with existing services. The Agency will use the information obtained from the survey to improve service where needed.

*Estimate of Burden:* Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 minutes per response. Respondents: Not-for-profit institutions; Business or other for-profit.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 300.

*Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:* 1.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:* 48 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Michele Brooks, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, at (202) 690-1078. FAX: (202) 720-4120.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: February 28, 2000.

**Christopher A. McLean,**

*Acting Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.*

[FR Doc. 00-5427 Filed 3-6-00; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410-15-M**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Utilities Service

#### Information Collection Activity; Comment Request

**AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended), the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) invites comments on this new information collection for which RUS intends to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by May 8, 2000.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** F. Lamont Heppe, Jr., Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., STOP 1522, Room 4036 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Telephone: (202) 720-9550. FAX: (202) 720-4120.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) regulation (5 CFR 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction

Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) requires that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies a new information collection that RUS is submitting to OMB for approval. Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to: F. Lamont Heppe, Jr., Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 1522, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1522. FAX: (202) 720-4120.

*Title:* Water and Waste Loans and Grants.

*Type of Request:* New Information Collection.

*Abstract:* The Rural Utilities Service is authorized by Section 306 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926) to make loans to public agencies, nonprofit corporations, and Indian tribes to fund water and waste disposal projects serving the most financially needy rural communities through the Water and Waste loan and grant program. Financial assistance should result in reasonable user costs for rural residents, rural businesses, and other rural users. The program is limited to rural areas and small towns with a population of 10,000 or less. The Water and Waste loan and grant program is administered through 7 CFR Part 1780. This program is currently cleared under OMB Control Number 0575-0015 and included with the Rural Housing Service's Community Facilities loan and grant program. At this time, RUS is requesting approval from OMB for a separate collection for its Water and Waste loan and grant program.

*Estimate of Burden:* Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to average 2.65 hours per response.