

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.

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

Signed at Washington, DC, February 13, 2003.

Carol House,

Acting Associate Administrator.

[FR Doc. 03-6057 Filed 3-12-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-20-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Maximum Portion of Guarantee Authority Available for Fiscal Year 2003

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: As set forth in 7 CFR part 4279, subpart B, each fiscal year (FY) the Agency shall establish a limit on the maximum portion of guarantee authority available for that fiscal year that may be used to guarantee loans with a guarantee fee of 1 percent or guaranteed loans with a guarantee percentage exceeding 80 percent. This notice covers only FY 2002 carryover and recovered funds. Once FY 2003 appropriated funds are apportioned, a second notice will be published for those funds.

Allowing the guarantee fee to be reduced to 1 percent or exceeding the 80 percent guarantee on certain guaranteed loans that meet the conditions set forth in 7 CFR 4279.107 and 4279.119 will increase the Agency's ability to focus guarantee assistance on projects which the Agency has found particularly meritorious, such as projects in rural communities that remain persistently poor, experience long-term population decline and job deterioration, are experiencing trauma as a result of natural disaster or are experiencing fundamental structural changes in the economic base.

Not all of the available Business and Industry (B&I) Guaranteed Loan program funding authority for FY 2002 was used; consequently, this and recovered funding authority for approved B&I Guaranteed Loans which did not come to fruition are now apportioned and available for use. Not

more than 12 percent of the Agency's quarterly apportioned carryover and recovered guarantee authority will be reserved for loan requests with a guarantee fee of 1 percent, and not more than 15 percent of the Agency quarterly apportioned carryover and recovered guarantee authority will be reserved for guaranteed loan requests with a guaranteed percentage exceeding 80 percent. Once the above quarterly limits have been reached, all additional loans guaranteed with carryover and recovered funds during the remainder of that quarter will require a 2 percent guarantee fee and not exceed an 80 percent guarantee limit. As an exception to this paragraph and for the purposes of this notice, loans developed by the North American Development Bank (NADBank) Community Adjustment and Investment Program (CAIP) will not count against the 15 percent limit. Up to 50 percent of CAIP funds may be used for loan requests with a guaranteed percentage exceeding 80 percent.

Written requests by the Rural Development State Office for approval of a guaranteed loan with a 1 percent guarantee fee or a guaranteed loan exceeding 80 percent must be forwarded to the National Office, Attn: Director, Business and Industry Division, for review and consideration prior to obligation of the guaranteed loan. The Administrator will provide a written response to the State Office confirming approval or disapproval of the request.

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 13, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Fred Kieferle, Processing Branch Chief, Business and Industry Division, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA, Stop 3224, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3224, telephone (202) 720-7818.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This action has been reviewed and determined not to be a rule or regulation as defined in Executive Order 12866.

Dated: March 4, 2003.

John Rosso,

Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

[FR Doc. 03-6052 Filed 3-12-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-XY-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Request for Collection of Public Information With the Use of a Survey

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection; comments requested.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Housing Service's intention to request clearance for a new information collection to measure the quality of service provided by the Rural Housing Service (RHS) Centralized Servicing Center (CSC).

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by May 12, 2003, to be assured of consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bill Scaggs, Section Head, Customer Service Branch, Centralized Servicing Center, 1520 Market Street, Room 3622, St. Louis, Missouri 63103, phone: (314) 206-2096, e-mail: bs244@stl.rural.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Rural Housing Service—Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Type of Request: New information collection.

Abstract: The Rural Housing Service (RHS) provides insured loans to low- and moderate-income applicants located in rural geographic areas to assist them in obtaining decent, sanitary, and safe dwellings. RHS currently processes loan originations through approximately 900 Field Offices. The RHS Centralized Servicing Center (CSC), located in St. Louis, Missouri, provides support to the Field Offices and is responsible for loan servicing functions with borrowers. The CSC was established to achieve a high level of customer service and operating efficiency. The CSC has established a fully integrated call center and is able to provide borrowers with convenient access to their loan account information.

To facilitate the CSC's mission and in an effort to continuously improve its services, a survey has been developed that can measure the quality of service that the Field Offices and borrowers receive when they contact the CSC. Respondents will only need to report information on a one-time basis. The outcome of the Customer Satisfaction Survey will provide the general satisfaction level among RHS customers throughout the nation highlighting areas that need improvement and to provide a benchmark for future surveys and improvements in customer service. A follow up survey will be conducted in 18 months, but may or may not be sent to the same initial respondents. Additionally, in accordance with Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the survey will enable CSC to measure the results and overall effectiveness of customer services