

Territories), entities organized under State law, and Indian tribes. Only grant funds have been appropriated to date.

- *Denali Commission Grants and Loans.* RUS may provide grants and loans to the Denali Commission, a Federal agency, for energy generation, transmission, and distribution facilities serving extremely high energy cost rural and remote communities in Alaska. Annual Denali grants are awarded and advanced as soon as funds are available to RUS. The Denali Grants are governed by a Memorandum of Understanding between the two agencies and by individual Grant Agreements. Only grant funds have been appropriated to date.

- *Bulk Fuel Revolving Fund Grants.* RUS may provide grants to State entities in existence as of November 9, 2000 to support revolving loan funds to improve the efficiency of fuel purchases for communities where the fuel cannot be delivered by surface transportation. Only Alaska and a handful of other States are eligible.

*Estimate of Burden:* Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 4.53 hours per response.

*Respondents:* Business or other for-profit, Not-for-profit institutions, State, local or tribal government.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 45.

*Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:* 4.11.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:* 828.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from MaryPat Daskal, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, at (202) 720-7853, FAX: (202) 720-8435.

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: January 4, 2007.

**Curtis M. Anderson,**

*Deputy Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.*  
[FR Doc. E7-204 Filed 1-10-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-15-P

## 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 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 March 12, 2007.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Richard C. Annan, Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., STOP 1522, Room 5170 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Telephone: (202) 720-8818. 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 an information collection that RUS is submitting to OMB for extension.

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: Richard C. Annan, Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 1522, Room 5170 South Building, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1522. FAX: (202)720-4120.

*Title:* Weather Radio Transmitter Grant Program.

*OMB Control Number:* 0572-0124.

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

*Abstract:* The National Weather Service operates an All Hazards Early Warning System that alerts people in areas covered by its transmissions of approaching dangerous weather and

other emergencies. The National Weather Service can typically provide warnings of specific weather dangers up to fifteen minutes prior to the event. At present, this system covers all major metropolitan areas and many smaller cities and towns; however, many rural areas lack NOAA Weather Radio coverage. The Rural Development Utilities Programs' Service Weather Radio Transmitter Grant Program finances the installation of new transmitters to extend the coverage of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Radio system (NOAA Weather Radio) in rural America thereby promoting public safety and awareness. The President of the United States and the United States Congress have made \$5 million in grant funds available to facilitate the expansion of NOAA Weather Radio system coverage into rural areas that are not covered or are poorly covered at this time. This grant program will continue to provide grant funds, on an expedited basis, for use in rural areas and communities of 50,000 or less inhabitants. Grant funds are available immediately and applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis until the appropriation is used in its entirety. Grant funds are used to purchase and install NOAA Weather Radio transmitters and antennas that are combined with donated tower space and other site resources to establish new rural NOAA Weather Radio transmitters. Eligible applicants must be non-profit corporations or associations (including Rural Development Utilities Programs electric and telecommunications borrower cooperatives), units of local or state government, or Federally-recognized Indian tribes.

*Estimate of Burden:* Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 6 hours per response.

*Respondents:* Not-for-profit institutions, State, local or tribal government.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 113.

*Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:* 2.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:* 678.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from MaryPat Daskal, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, at (202) 720-7853, 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: January 4, 2007.

**Curtis M. Anderson,**

*Deputy Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.*

[FR Doc. E7-205 Filed 1-10-07; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Utilities Service

#### Earth Resources, Inc.: Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment

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

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of an Environmental Assessment for public review.

**SUMMARY:** The Rural Utilities Service, an agency which administers the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Utilities Programs (USDA Rural Development) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) related to possible financial assistance to Earth Resources, Inc. (ERI) for the proposed construction of Plant Carl, a 20-megawatt electric power generation plant proposed to be built by Earth Resources, Inc. (ERI) in Franklin County, Georgia. ERI is requesting the USDA Rural Development to provide financial assistance for the proposed project.

**DATES:** Written comments on this Notice must be received on or before February 12, 2007.

**ADDRESSES:** The EA will be available for public review at the USDA Rural Development, Utilities Programs, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Mail Stop 1571, Washington, DC 20250-1571; at the USDA Rural Development's Web site—<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/ea.htm>; at ERI's headquarters office located at 774 Highway 320, Carnesville, Georgia 30521; and two Franklin County Public Library locations:

Lavonia Carnegie Library, 28 Hartwell Road, Lavonia, Georgia 30553.

Royston Public Library, 684 Franklin Springs Street, Royston, Georgia 30662.

Written comments should be sent to: Ms. Stephanie Strength, Environmental Protection Specialist, USDA, Rural Development, Utilities Programs, Engineering and Environmental Staff, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Mail Stop 1571, Washington, DC 20250-1571, or e-mail:

[Stephanie.strength@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:Stephanie.strength@wdc.usda.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Stephanie Strength, Environmental Protection Specialist, USDA, Rural

Development, Utilities Programs, Engineering and Environmental Staff, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Mail Stop 1571, Washington, DC 20250-1571, Telephone: (202) 720-0468. Ms. Strength's e-mail address is [stephanie.strength@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:stephanie.strength@wdc.usda.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The proposed project area is located in Franklin County, Georgia. The proposal will be sited on a previously graded five acre portion of a 139-acre property zoned Commercial and Industrial. The proposal includes the generation plant and accessory structures, fuel storage and handling areas, traffic circulation and parking areas, waste holding areas, and stormwater management features. Approximately ten additional acres will be devoted to a spray application water treatment system for which no new clearing and grading will be required. The remaining acres will be maintained as natural area buffers.

Alternatives considered by the USDA Rural Development and ERI included: (a) No action, (b) alternate locations, (c) alternate methods to provide service, (d) alternate construction methods and materials, (e) alternate designs, (f) load management and energy conservation options, and (g) alternate generation technologies. An Environmental Report that described the proposed project in detail and discussed its anticipated environmental impacts has been accepted by USDA Rural Development as the EA for the proposed project. The EA is available for public review at addresses provided above in this Notice.

Questions and comments should be sent to Ms. Stephanie Strength, USDA Rural Development at the mailing or e-mail addresses provided above in this Notice. The USDA Rural Development should receive comments on the EA in writing by February 12, 2007 to ensure that they are considered in the environmental impact determination.

Should the USDA Rural Development determine, based on the EA, that the impacts of the construction and operation of the project would not have a significant environmental impact, it will prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact. Public notification of a Finding of No Significant Impact would be published in the **Federal Register** and in newspapers with circulation in the project area.

Any final action by the USDA Rural Development related to the proposed project will be subject to, and contingent upon, compliance with all relevant Federal, State and local environmental laws and regulations, and completion of the environmental review requirements as prescribed in

the USDA Rural Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR part 1794).

**Mark S. Plank,**

*Director, Engineering and Environmental Staff, USDA/Rural Development/Utilities Programs.*

[FR Doc. E7-217 Filed 1-10-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-15-P

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Utilities Service

#### Norborne Baseload Plant

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

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement and notice of public meetings.

**SUMMARY:** The Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency which administers the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Utilities Programs (USDA/RD) is issuing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Norborne Baseload Plant (Norborne Plant). The Draft EIS was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (U.S.C. 4231 *et seq.*) in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500-1508) and USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) regulations (7 CFR part 1794). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is a cooperating agency for this Draft EIS. The purpose of the EIS is to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of and alternatives to the Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. (AECI) application for a USDA/RD loan to construct the proposed 660 megawatt (MW) coal-fired power plant in Carroll County, Missouri, near the town of Norborne. AECI is proposing to use a coal combustion technology known as supercritical pulverized coal, along with other proposed pollution controls collectively known as Best Available Control Technology (BACT). The primary components of the Proposed Action include the following:

- Power plant and associated facilities and operations, including the plant cooling system, waste management operations, lighting, and fire protection and other safety systems.
- 345-kV substation with associated transmission line modifications and communications facilities.
- New and modified substations.
- Approximately 134 miles of new 345-kV transmission lines to connect with AECI's existing network.