

USDA Rural Development Announces Over \$247,500 Investment in Community Infrastructure to Benefit Mount Bethel

By USDA

Harrisburg, Pa., – U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Pennsylvania Acting State Director Jeremy Wilson has announced an investment of \$2.2 million for community projects in Pennsylvania. Mount Bethel Volunteer Fire Department will receive \$247,500 for improvements and construction of an emergency shelter.

“From emergency shelters to educating the next generation of rural dentists, Rural Development ensures Pennsylvanians receive the funding they need to innovate solutions for safety,” said Wilson.

The USDA Rural Development investment of \$247,500 in the Mount Bethel Volunteer Fire Department will fund the construction of a 2,500-foot emergency shelter. This will include an American with Disabilities Act compliant bathrooms and showers, a new HVAC system, a nursing room for mothers, and equipment and supplies for the shelter. The emergency shelter will benefit the 6,933 residents of Upper Mount Bethel and Portland Borough.

Projects are funded through USDA Rural Development Community Facilities grants. USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities Programs offer direct loans, loan guarantees and grants to develop or improve essential public services and facilities in communities across rural America. These investments strengthen critical community infrastructure, enhance quality of life, and help rural towns attract and retain businesses and services. To learn more about these programs, contact 717-237-2199. For more information on USDA Rural Development investments in rural America, visit the Rural Data Gateway. The Rural Data Gateway is an online tool that strengthens USDA Rural Development partnerships with rural people, entrepreneurs, government officials and Congress by making investment data accessible to the public.

Clean Team Workforce May Employee of the Month

By Stefanie Appel

ALLENTOWN, PA – The Clean Team Workforce congratulates its Employee of the Month for May, Roger R. Roger never thought he would end up homeless. He owned two successful small businesses over the course of thirty years. In 2020, Roger decided to exit his repossession business. He enjoyed the challenge and travel of the job but was looking to slow down the fast-paced life. Roger took a shop maintenance and forklift job during the day, while managing apartments at night. Sadly, tragedy struck Roger's family in 2021, changing his life forever. Roger's loss is very personal, and he remains reluctant to talk about it, but he said, “I lost my way after that tragic incident, and it forever changed me internally. It was a loss I couldn't comprehend, and I just mentally gave up for several years.” To cope with his loss, Roger turned to alcohol. A few years later, Roger found the strength to give up drinking, only to develop seizures. He was hospitalized and went through rehabilitation.

The financial strain of the hospitalization took his savings and apartment, but he did not break his commitment to staying sober. Roger struggled with homelessness for approximately a year before turning to the Allentown Rescue Mission. “I found the Mission in my greatest time of need,” he stated. Roger joined the Mission's eight-week Transformation Program to take advantage of the classes it offered.

He learned life skills and participated in biblical classes. “The opportunities here are beyond just a bed and a meal.” After graduating from the Transformation Program, Roger was hired with the Clean Team Workforce and immediately selected to work in the Mission's food service department. Between his past cooking experience and his strong work ethic, Roger quickly stood out. Today, he is known as a reliable colleague who is easy to work with. Roger is saving money and realizing that everything he aspires to achieve is within his grasp. He would love to purchase a small piece of land and looks forward to becoming fully independent again.



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Wednesday, June 17, 2026
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