

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, June 3, 2004

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Cindy Metzger, Program Assistant

Capital RC&D Area Council, Inc.

Phone: (717) 948-6633

Fax: (717) 948-6306

Email: clm32@psu.edu

Rural Community Fire Protection Program Unveiled

The Capital Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area Council, Inc. announces an open application period for the **Rural Community Fire Protection Program**, which will provide resources to communities to install non-pressurized hydrants for fire hazard mitigation. Capital RC&D will partner with fire departments, landowners and municipalities within Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, and York counties to create safer rural communities.

Through this project, Capital RC&D intends to supply "dry" fire hydrants to aid local fire departments in their efforts. Dry fire hydrants are non-pressurized, heavy-duty plastic pipes that are permanently installed in streams or ponds, allowing for quick and safe access to the water source. Strategically placed, dry fire hydrants can provide a continual supply of water for fire hazard mitigation.

Currently, there is a lack of safe access to water supplies for fire hazards in areas not served by public water systems. This results in more difficult fire fighting, greater property damage, and increased risk of loss of life. Farmers, homeowners, and businesses in rural areas face a distinct disadvantage in safety and fire protection.

An additional goal for the program is to assist communities in reducing their Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings. The insurance industry has long recognized the value of dry fire hydrants, and discounts are sometimes offered to clients in areas where the hydrants have been installed. Dry fire hydrants can also result in fuel energy savings and drought protection (treated water supplies can be reserved for drinking needs).

The Capital RC&D is a multi-county nonprofit organization, formed as a private/public partnership between the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and local community leaders. A local volunteer board consisting of representatives from government, business, organizations, conservation districts and individuals guides the RC&D Council.

Applications for the program will be accepted until August 13, 2004, and are available by contacting the Capital RC&D office or on the website at: www.capitalrcd.org.