

# Grants

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## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AWARDS \$6 MILLION GRANT TO PADUCAH AREA COMMUNITY REUSE ORGANIZATION

Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson today announced that the Department of Energy (DOE) has awarded a \$6 million grant to the Paducah Area Community Reuse Organization (PACRO) to fund projects to help offset job losses at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Energy Plant. Today's announcement fulfills a commitment made by Secretary Richardson when he visited Paducah in October 1998.

"These grants will help the Paducah community diversify its economy and help offset the economic impacts of reduced uranium operations," said Secretary Richardson. "I want to thank Senators McConnell and Bunning as well as Congressman Whitfield for their hard work on behalf of their community, and for their strong support of the department's worker and community transition program which makes this partnership possible."

Among the community needs PACRO has identified are:

- support for entrepreneurs' efforts to create new jobs;
- training displaced workers for new careers;
- developing new industrial parks and facilities; and
- reuse of the plant's facilities and resources, such as buildings and land.

PACRO was launched in 1997 to develop ways to create jobs to replace those being cut at the enrichment plant and to consider the economic effects should the production of enriched uranium at the site end. Congress provided DOE money to fund efforts similar to PACRO as a way to provide for workers whose jobs were eliminated as a result of defense downsizing following the end of the Cold War.

DOE awarded PACRO \$400,000 in planning funds in early 1998, and early this year the organization sought additional monies to fund the projects pinpointed by its planning efforts. Specific projects to be funded by the new grant are an Entrepreneur Clearing House and Revolving Loan Fund, Business/Industry Retention and Expansion of Marketing/Technical Assistance, Skills Services Assessment, Industrial Park Development, Marketing, Recruitment and Facility Reuse Programs.

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"We're going to focus on developing ways to reindustrialize the site in the future using the facilities, resources and workforce here," said Jimmie Hodges, site manager for DOE in Paducah and a member of PACRO's executive committee. "But this grant goes beyond that, it allows PACRO to look at total regional economic development."

PACRO members come from the five-county area that is most affected by job cuts at the enrichment plant—McCracken, Ballard, Graves, Marshall and Massac (Ill.). Kristin Reese, CEO of the Greater Paducah Economic Development Council, chairs the 60 member organization with administrative support from the Purchase Area Development District.

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