



# Annual Report 2005

Fiscal Year 2005 Edition

Visit us at [www.RuralRI.org](http://www.RuralRI.org)

**Calendar of RIRDC Quarterly Board Meeting dates for 2006:**

Fourth Friday of the month  
January, April, July, October

Location: UCLUB  
URI Kingston Campus,  
95 Upper College Rd.  
Kingston, RI  
9:00 a.m.

Please RSVP your attendance  
to Executive Director at  
RIRDC (401) 667-0071

**RIRDC Calendar**

**Executive Board Meeting  
held monthly on 4th Thursday  
of each month 8:30 a.m.**

All meetings open to the public

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## Chairman's Letter — Continued Progress for Rural Rhode Island

by Geoff Marchant

In 2005, The Rhode Island Rural Development Council has continued its agenda of making positive impacts within rural area communities and has reaped some visible benefits from its efforts. Three areas of concentration were key ingredients to a successful 2005. They included a newly constructed facility, a series of successful grant awards and a school-to-career educational initiative for our future generations.

The grants awarded to RIRDC in 2004 bore fruit in 2005. The first sign was the new construction of a 4H / FFA sheep and goat building with funds earned by a \$35,167 Champlin Foundations grant on behalf of the Richmond Pomona Grange, at the Washington County Fairgrounds.

The Washington County Richmond Pomona Grange project was organized and lead by Paul and Julie Brodeur and a very dedicated corps of volunteers

workers from the Grange. The construction was completed ahead of schedule and hosted a 4H event. The building was formally dedicated at this year's annual mid-August 2005 Washington County Fair event, again filled to capacity with 4H and FFA members hopeful in winning coveted livestock blue ribbon awards.

The RI Rural Development Council most rewarding achievement was the USDA Rural Development Valued Added Producer grant of \$50,000 presented to the RI Dairy Farms Cooperative better know as "Rhody Fresh". This grant process is an annual national competition for grant funds that had eluded this Council's previous attempt in 2004. But this year's grant award was a sweet success for our Council and for the RI Dairy Farms Cooperative. It will be used to expand the ever-increasing number of dairy products of "Rhody Fresh". This Council remains humbled and thankful to the citizens of Rhode Island who consistently support and remain loyal purchasers of local farms

## New Projects for 2006



- Local Meat Production Feasibility Study on local farms interested in meat processing of beef, lamb and poultry products to Rhode Islanders.
- Rural Heritage and Conservation Tourism initiative for the South County. Seeking methods for non-profits to take advantage of free advertising services when promoting their historic or natural resource sites and potential areas for grant opportunities.
- New logo design for local RI Shellfisherman's Association through a grant for design layout by local artist Don Bousquet.
- Forestry and Wood Expo -April 7-8, 2006 at CCRI, Warwick, RI.

## Chairman's Letter—Continued

products and in saving the rural farmlands.

Continuing on the heels of this USDA success are two additional grants awards in 2005. The RIRDC received one USDA-Rural Development grant to work with the RI Shellfishermen's Association for a logo design. The use of a logo is to move the clam commodity product to a recognized name-branded RI quahog product. Many thanks go to Don Bousquet for providing his artistic talent in creating a unique design for the quahoggers' marketing logo. Additional grant funds will be sought in 2006 for the startup production printing of new mesh-net bags for resale of the branded "Rhode Island Quahogs" to consumers.

The second award—another USDA-RD grant—was directed to contract with the Eastern RI Conservation District on a feasibility study for local meat production of RI cattle, sheep and poultry. This grant continues into 2006 with overwhelming enthusiasm from ranchers. It holds the promise for locally grown, production cuts of meats from local Rhode Island farms/ranches sold directly to RI consumers.

Regarding this year's educational initiative, the Executive Director, Jerry Bertrand has been serving as School to Career Industry Field Coordinator for Natural Resources, Agriculture and Agriscience. He has been working closely with the RI Nursery and Landscape Association and the University of Rhode Island, Plant Science department, in crafting a program of study in "Landscape Horticulture" at the Community College of Rhode Island. Early in 2005 the Council commissioned a study done by Consultant-

Kris Koch, regarding the number of High Schools within the State currently offering natural resource, landscape or horticulture in their science programs. The study identified ten High Schools statewide reporting some type of natural resource, plant or greenhouse programs with a graduating student population of 424 students desiring further education in this discipline. This information was presented to CCRI this year in hopes of creating a "landscape horticulture" or "natural resource" certificate program at CCRI with fully transferable credits to the URI Plant Science Program. Positive talks continue with CCRI for a full certificate offering at the school.

Looking ahead, the RIRDC will be supporting a Rural Heritage and Conservation Development Tourism initiative for South County towns. Also, some RIRDC funds will be directed towards legal counsel for an affordable housing project in South County.

All in all, the RIRDC has fared well in 2005 and remains a small beacon of hope for rural ideas. We are open to listening to individuals and groups willing to collaborate for appropriate economic growth within our rural communities. For the foreseeable future, we at the RIRDC will continue our mission to strive for maintaining the quality of life for the rural communities of Rhode Island. As always, the RI Rural Development Council remains ready to provide resource assistance to new rural ventures. For more information contact Jerry Bertrand at (401) 667-0071.

## Win-Win Agreement for two RI Councils

The RI Rural Development Council (RIRDC) entered into cooperative agreement this year with the RI Resource Conservation and Development Area Council a non-profit RI-Area Council partnership under the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service.

The Rhode Island Rural Development Council provided services to RI RC&D for its continued implementation activities of the 2005 FY Work Plan and Area Plan. The agreement primarily covered staff time necessary for the continuance of RI RC&D activities while NRCS recruited for a new RC&D Coordinator. In late October, the



NRCS named Christopher Modisette as its new RI RC&D Coordinator. Chris was the former Executive Director of the tri-state Southern New England Forest Consortium, Inc. His recognized expertise and knowledge in forestry and natural resources provides the RI RC&D Council true credibility in the rural communities and natural resources areas of the State.

The RIRDC wishes to congratulate Chris Modisette on his new appointment and many successes in his new position.

The cooperative agreement between the two Councils continues for the short term.

## New Facility at Washington County Fairgrounds

Many 4H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) students, alumni members and supporters will be happy to know that a collaboration among the RI Rural Development Council, RI State Grange and its Washington County Pomona Grange has yielded a \$35,167 grant award from *The Champlin Foundations* to restore the 4H/FFA sheep and goat building at the Washington County Fairgrounds, Richmond, RI.

The grant award announcements from *The Champlin Foundations* were made public in January 2005 and the Washington County Fairgrounds Council members were delighted with this news. Members are very thankful for this support to the youth programs at the Washington County Fairgrounds.

Cold winter days and wet spring weather have not deterred the groups of dedicated Grange and 4-H volunteers in this construction project. Workers began in earnest in Spring, 2005 with many groups of volunteers doing the local version of extreme building makeover—"rural edition". The original structure built almost 39 years ago was demolished and totally reconstructed in ample time for this year's Washington County Fair. The combined Champlin funds and volunteer work crews have provided Washington County Fair with a significantly improved 4H FFA building and a target completion date achieved in July.

Reactions were very positive about the new facility. At one of the first 4H goat and sheep events held in the new building, Jessica Damicis, age 13, from the Little Rhody Ranchers 4-H Club stated, "it's a barn that I am proud to have my sheep displayed in". Nathan Tefft, age 10, said "it was a lot of fun to help build the barn" and, his twin brother, Justin said, "it's a great place for kids to hang out". "Kids are what we call baby goats."

The current structure measures 100 feet long by 29 feet wide. New metal pens have been ordered to replace the worn original wooden pens for the sheep and goats and a poured cement

floor will cover the former dirt floor. Several fire district volunteers also had been involved in the reconstruction efforts and the planning committee continues to solicit donations for lumber, materials and other in-kind volunteer work support. Rural area youth and young adults with their prized sheep and goats will be housed in the new surroundings in hopeful anticipation of winning a blue ribbon award in the annual mid-August days judging at the Washington County Fairgrounds.



**Pictured: (L to R) Jessica Damicis with Addie (sheep) and Nathan Tefft with Buttercup (goat).**

At its annual Thank You Supper, The Washington County Fairgrounds Committee thanked the RI State Grange's President and Treasurer, the RI Rural Development Council, and the volunteer committee of the Washington County Pomona Grange for their continued dedication and strong leadership in this project. Special thanks to The Champlin Foundations and Julie and Paul Brodeur for their visionary ideas, building construction coordination and dedicated hard work.

## Rhody Fresh wins USDA Value Added Producer Grant

Rhody Fresh was recognized in a ceremony during the 2007 Farm Bill Listening Tour session held in Rhode Island on October 14th at the URI Coastal Resource Institute, Bay Campus. A \$50,000 check from the USDA's Department of Rural Development-Value Added Producer Grant funds will be used for new marketing efforts for Rhody Fresh. Currently "Rhody Fresh" milk products are offered only in half-gallon cartons and one-gallon containers. Funds will support new quarts, half & half and 5-gallon commercial containers.

(Not shown in the photo on right is David Tuttle, State Director for USDA MA/RI/CT Rural Development).



Presenting the award (R to L) is Mark Rey, USDA Natural Resources and Environment Under Secretary to Louis Escobar, President of the RI Dairy Farms Cooperative. Also pictured is James Hines, Executive Director of the RI Dairy Farms Cooperative and Jerry Bertrand, Executive Director of the RI Rural Development Council.



*The Rhode Island Rural Development Council*  
*35 Belver Ave., Suite 117, North Kingstown, RI*

**2006 FORESTRY & WOOD EXPO**

April 7 & 8, 2006  
at Community College  
of Rhode Island  
400 East Avenue (Rt. 113)  
Warwick, Rhode Island

Seminars  
Workshops  
Business Luncheons

For more info go to  
[www.rifco.org](http://www.rifco.org)  
RI Forest Conservator's  
Organization, Inc.  
Post Office Box 53  
Scituate, RI 02857  
(401) 568-3421

A non-profit organization  
dedicated to the  
protection and the wise use  
of Rhode Island's  
woodland resources



The Rhode Island Rural Development Council is dedicated to improving the quality of life in rural Rhode Island, while preserving the characteristics that give rural communities their unique sense of place.

Visit us Online at [www.RuralRI.org](http://www.RuralRI.org)

Or, Email us at [Director@RuralRI.org](mailto:Director@RuralRI.org)

#### **RIRDC Executive Committee**

**Geoffrey A. Marchant** - Chair, RI RDC  
E.G. Community. Development Consortium  
**Jeffrey A. Gofton** - Past RIRC&D Chair  
**R. Larry Aker**, Town Council, Exeter  
**Kenneth D. Ayars** - DEM Division of Agriculture  
**Edward T. Baker, Jr.** - USDA RC & D  
**Susan Barker** - Washington County Regional Planning Council  
**Raymond M. Goff** - Town Planner, Glocester  
**Thomas Sandham** - Eastern RI Conservation District

#### **Council Members**

**Ben Bergantino** - RI Statewide Planning  
**Annette Bourne** - RI Housing Mortgage & Finance Corp.  
**Lisa W. Bryer** - Town Planner, Jamestown  
**Richard J. Burke** -USDA Rural Development  
**Robert G. Driscoll** - Town Administrator, Portsmouth  
**Darlene Towne Evans** - South Kingstown Chamber of Commerce  
**James Hines** - RI Dairy Farms Cooperative  
**James Pagliarini** - Central Nurseries  
**Harriet Powell** - Southern RI Conservation District  
**Perry Raso** - Ocean State Aquafarms  
**Richard C. Rhodes III**, Assoc. Dean for Research and Outreach,  
Assoc. Dir, URI College of Environment and Life Sciences  
**Raymond P. Robinson** - Rural Resident, West Kingstown  
**Wayne L. Salisbury** - Local Official, Scituate  
**Milton Schumacher** - Rural Resident  
**Robert S. Swanson** - USDA/Farm Service Agency  
**Matthew Thomas** - Chief Sachem, Narragansett Tribe  
**Marc Tremblay** - Northern RI Conservation District  
**Michael Walker** - RI Economic Development Corporation