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AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 301, 552; 7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*, 1921 *et seq.*, 6941 *et seq.*; 7 CFR 2.7.

SOURCE: 63 FR 16085, Apr. 2, 1998, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General

§ 1700.1 General.

(a) The Rural Electrification Administration (REA) was established by Executive Order No. 7037 on May 11, 1935. Statutory authority was provided by the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (RE Act) (7 U.S.C. 901). The RE Act established REA as a lending agency with responsibility for developing a program for rural electrification.

(b) On October 28, 1949, the RE Act was amended to authorize REA to

make loans to improve and extend telephone service in rural areas. The Rural Telephone Bank (RTB), an agency of the United States, was established by amendment to the RE Act, approved May 7, 1971. The Administrator of RUS serves as the Bank's chief executive with the title of Governor.

(c) The Secretary of Agriculture (Secretary) established the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) on October 20, 1994, pursuant to the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, (7 U.S.C. 6941 *et seq.*). RUS was assigned responsibility for administering electric and telecommunications loan and loan guarantee programs previously administered by REA, including programs of the Rural Telephone Bank (RTB), and water and waste loans and grants previously administered by the Rural Development Administration, along with other functions as the Secretary determined appropriate. The rights, interests, obligations, duties, and contracts previously vested in REA were transferred to, and vested in RUS.

§ 1700.2 Availability of information.

(a) The offices of RUS are located in the South Building of the United States Department of Agriculture at 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1500. Hours of operation are from 8:15 AM to 4:45 PM, Eastern time on Federal Government business days.

(b) Information about RUS is available for public inspection and copying as required by the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552 *et seq.* Information about availability and costs of agency publications and other agency materials is available from the Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Room 5159-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., STOP 1530, Washington, DC 20250-1530. Phone 202-720-9450. FAX 202-720-8435.

(c) RUS issues indexes of publications in conformance with the Freedom of Information Act and Department of Agriculture regulations at 7 CFR part 1. Many RUS documents, including regulations and delegations of authority for headquarters and field staff are

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available on the world wide web at <http://www.usda.gov/rus>.

[63 FR 16085, Apr. 2, 1998, as amended at 71 FR 8435, Feb. 17, 2006]

§ 1700.3 Requests under the Freedom of Information Act.

Department of Agriculture procedures for requests for records under the Freedom of Information Act are found at 7 CFR part 1. Requests must be in writing and may be submitted in person or by mail to United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service, Room 5159-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., STOP 1530, Washington, DC 20250-1530; or by FAX to 202-401-1977. As set forth in 7 CFR 1.16, fees may be charged for processing of requests for records. An appeal of the agency determination concerning the request for official records shall be made in writing to the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Room 5135-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., STOP 1510, Washington, DC 20250-1510.

[71 FR 8435, Feb. 17, 2006]

§ 1700.4 Public comments on proposed rules.

RUS requires that all persons submitting comments to a proposed rule or other document published by the agency in the FEDERAL REGISTER, submit comments as specified in the published notice. Copies of comments submitted are available to the public in conformance with 7 CFR part 1.

[71 FR 8435, Feb. 17, 2006]

§§ 1700.5–1700.24 [Reserved]

Subpart B—Agency Organization and Functions

§ 1700.25 Office of the Administrator.

The Administrator, who also serves as Governor of the RTB, is appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Under Secretary, Rural Development delegated to the Administrator, in 7 CFR part 2, responsibility for administering the programs and activities of RUS and RTB. The Administrator is aided directly by Deputy Administrators and by Assistant Administrators for the

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electric program, telecommunications program, the water and environmental programs, and program accounting and regulatory analysis, and by other staff offices. The work of the agency is carried out as described in this part.

§ 1700.26 Deputy Administrator.

The Deputy Administrator aids and assists the Administrator. The Deputy Administrator provides overall policy direction to all RUS programs. The Deputy Administrator reviews agency policies and, as necessary, implements changes and participates with the Administrator and other officials in planning and formulating the programs and activities of the agency, including the making and servicing of loans and grants. The Deputy Administrator is “first assistant” for purposes of the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998 (5 U.S.C. 3345–3349d).

[71 FR 8435, Feb. 17, 2006]

§ 1700.27 Chief of Staff.

The Chief of Staff aids and assists the Administrator and the Deputy Administrator. The Chief of Staff advises the Administrator regarding policy initiatives and operational issues and assists the Administrator and the Deputy Administrator in developing and planning agency program initiatives. The Chief of Staff is responsible for implementation of overall policy initiatives and provides direction to all RUS programs.

[71 FR 8436, Feb. 17, 2006]

§ 1700.28 Electric Program.

RUS, through the Electric Program, makes loans and loan guarantees for rural electrification and the furnishing of electric service to persons in rural areas.

(a) *The Assistant Administrator, Electric Program*, directs and coordinates the rural electrification programs, participating with the Administrator, and others, in planning and formulating the programs and activities of the agency, and performs other activities as the Administrator may prescribe from time to time.

(b) *Primary point of contact with borrowers.* Two regional divisions, one for the Northern Region and one for the