

Texas Department of Agriculture Awards Over Half a Million To Canutillo ISD Food Service Program

Canutillo Independent School District (CISD) received notification recently of its selection as one of the Texas School Food Authorities (SFAs) to be awarded funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to enhance its food service capabilities.

According to Adele Balesh, CISD Food Services director, Canutillo ISD is scheduled to receive nearly \$552,000 to improve the quality, safety and efficiency of delivering meals to students. The money will be used to replace, upgrade or update equipment at seven different campuses, Balesh said.

Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) Commissioner Todd Staples stated that TDA is working to make sure stimulus dollars are used to benefit Texas school children and Texas schools. TDA received \$11.5 million from the ARRA of 2009 to replace food preparation equipment in schools.

“It is my first priority to ensure any dollars allocated to the Texas Department of Agriculture are used efficiently and have the greatest impact to the eligible recipients,” said Commissioner Staples. “Schools can use this money to replace old, worn-out equipment and make sure our children are receiving healthy meals. These funds will go a long way to improving the nutritional offerings in schools,” he added.

School districts that participate in the national school lunch program are eligible for the funding, with priority given to schools with a majority of students eligible to receive free or reduced-cost meals. CISD is a participant in the Federal Universal Free Provision II Program, which provides free breakfast and lunch meals to all students.

“Our application for these funds was a team effort with input from our food service maintenance staff and managers at our schools. It is perfect timing, and we will be able to start the 2009-2010 school year with new equipment,” said Balesh. “Our intention is to purchase the new equipment through co-op bids, providing a fast, efficient method to replace our old equipment this summer,” she added.



Canutillo Elementary School (CES) will receive three new reach through refrigerator/warmer units to replace old non-working units similar to those shown in the photo behind CES Food Service Manager, Jesusita Ruiz, who is serving breakfast to children during the food service summer program.