

# Director's letter



Robert Stewart  
RCAP Executive Director

Now that this new year (and new decade) is underway, I am happy to announce that *Rural Matters* will be published every two months. Two more issues each year will allow us to bring you additional, timely information on rural development activities and issues. Work also continues on making our new website, [www.rcap.org](http://www.rcap.org), a vibrant means to provide current information concerning RCAP activities as well as programs and developments that impact rural development. I hope you will let us know your suggestions of ways we can improve our communications and outreach, especially what we do through *Rural Matters* and our website.

Looking back on 2009, even though our country has suffered through a historic economic downturn, it would be hard not to say that significant advancements were made to address infrastructure needs, especially those related to water and wastewater utilities. As a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, major new funding was provided for water and wastewater utility infrastructure; approximately \$3.7 billion was made available through USDA Rural Development programs and another \$6 billion through EPA's State Revolving Funds. This additional funding is helping communities, both rural and urban, to better provide services that are crucial to promoting economic development and maintaining public health.

As we all know, much more needs to be done. Congressman Earl Blumenauer, from Oregon's 3rd Congressional District, has for many years been a champion of infrastructure needs and sustainable and "Livable Communities." In this issue you will find information concerning his efforts and his ideas on ways to improve the ability of utilities to fund their infrastructure needs and promote sustainability within communities.

One example of a small community struggling with financing issues is in an article concerning Davenport, Calif. Our Western RCAP, the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), has been providing support for this community as it has worked toward addressing a crucial water treatment issue.

I also want to highlight the second part of an article concerning our staff who were honored for their enormous contributions to RCAP. These fine folks are what make RCAP the foremost rural development organization in the United States! ■