

West Limerick to benefit from its share of €425.4 million

Rural Development Programme

Following an allocation of almost €10million under the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, local Community Development Company West Limerick Resources is currently in preparation for the official launch which is expected to take place before the end of January. The Rural Development Programme, formally known as LEADER, is designed to target resources to support improvements to the quality of life in rural areas and the diversification and development of the rural economy.

A number of areas will be targeted under this Programme including:

- Increasing economic activity in the rural economy
- Supporting the creation and development of micro-enterprises in the rural economy
- Encouraging rural tourism based on the sustainable development of natural resources and the cultural and natural heritage
- Improving access to basic services for rural dwellers
- Regenerating rural villages by improving economic prospects, community relations and quality of life
- Maintaining, restoring and upgrading the natural and built heritage

West Limerick Resources expect that the Rural Development Programme will be operational by the end of January and will be holding a series of Information Workshops throughout the West Limerick area to inform individuals, small business and community groups about the programme and the supports available. The dates of the workshops will be advertised in the local papers in early February.

The Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 is the largest ever package for rural development, almost treble the amount available under the last programme (2000-2006). Speaking about the new Rural Development Programme, West Limerick Resources Chairperson Mary Quaid said *“Rural Development is playing an increasingly important role in helping rural areas meet the economic, social and environmental challenges of the twenty first century. We have achieved much under the last two programmes but there is still much to be done. Under this new programme entrepreneurs and community groups can benefit from increased access to financial assistance for a wide range of projects*

and initiatives. Community groups will be especially happy to learn that the rate of aid for capital projects has increased from 50% in the last Programme to 75% under this new Programme. We now strongly encourage individuals, groups and communities to think about the long-term potential of their area and work with us to develop their vision into reality for the benefit of the entire community.”

For further information please see www.wlr.ie or contact: Joan Casey, Rural Development Programme Coordinator on 069 66294 or email: jcasey@wlr.ie.