

# USDA Announces Contracts for Round 3 of the Farmers to Families Food Box Program

By USDA

Washington, D.C. – Following President Donald Trump’s approval to include up to an additional \$1 billion in the Farmers to Families Food Box Program, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has approved up to \$1 billion in contracts to support American producers and communities in need through the USDA Farmers to Families Food Box Program. Earlier this week, USDA reached a milestone of having distributed more than 90 million food boxes in support of American farmers and families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.



“These contract awards will go to vendors who submitted the strongest proposals in support of American agriculture and the American people. The high level of interest and quality of proposals are a testament that the program is accomplishing what we intended – supporting U.S. farmers and distributors and getting food to those who need it most. It’s a real trifecta, which is why we call it a win-win-win,” said Secretary Perdue. “Thanks to President Trump and his commitment to the program with the announcement of an additional \$1 billion in funding, more farmers will be supported, and more families will receive the nutritious food they need during these difficult times.”

These contract awards are a result of the third round of Farmers to Families Food Box program announced on July 24, 2020, and President Trump’s announcement on August 24 that up to an additional \$1 billion was being made available for deliveries through October 31, 2020. A full list of approved suppliers will be posted on the Farmers to Families Food Box Program webpage.

### Background

In this third round of purchases, USDA announced plans to purchase combination boxes to ensure all recipient organizations have access to fresh produce, dairy products, fluid milk and meat products. These boxes will be distributed to every county in America.

USDA solicited new proposals for the third round. Proposals were required to illustrate how coverage would be provided to areas identified as opportunity zones, detail subcontracting agreements, and address the “last mile” delivery of product into the hands of the food insecure population.

Entities who met the government’s requirements and specifications were issued agreements and submitted pricing through a competitive acquisition process. Agreements were awarded based on the pricing submitted for the delivery locations proposed, box content, last mile delivery plans, means testing compliance, and support of small and local/regional food systems.

In the ongoing second round of purchasing and distribution, which began July 1 and will conclude Sep. 18, 2020, USDA has purchased more than \$1.113 billion of food through extended contracts of select vendors from the first round of the program as well as new contracts focused on Opportunity Zones in order to direct food to reach underserved areas, places where either no boxes have yet been delivered, or where boxes are being delivered but where there is additional need.

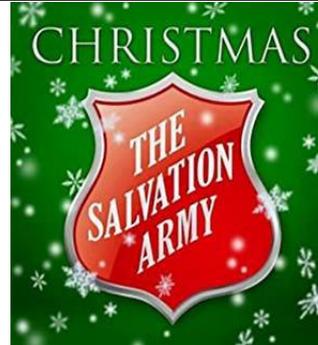
The first round of purchases occurred from May 15 through June 30, 2020 and saw more than 35.5 million boxes delivered in the first 45 days.

Updates to the number of food boxes verified as delivered will continue to be displayed on the USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) website, with breakdowns by performance period on the Farmers to Families Food Box Program page.

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## Merry Christmas Fund for the 2020

By Captain Barbara Cure

PEN ARGYL - The Mission Of The Salvation Army: The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human need in His name without discrimination.

The Salvation Army has been in Pen Argyl since the early 1900’s, serving the families of The Slate Belt and beyond. Every Christmas an effort is made to serve as many families as possible. For the 2019 Christmas season we served over 125 families with food and gifts.

We would like to begin a Merry Christmas Fund for the 2020 Christmas Season with donations being made to help the Pen Argyl Corps stretch its regular operating budget during the holiday season and beyond. (These donations could be made in memory/honor of loved ones).

Those who wish to contribute to this fund can send donations via check or money order made payable to The Salvation Army, P.O. Box 57, Pen Argyl, PA 18072. Contributors who wish to be recognized in the Blue Valley Times during the month of December 2020 should include a very brief, legible holiday message with their donations.

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## Ken Field

Owner of Slate Belt Energy Services

Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times

### Just Do Something

Sometimes it's hard to stay motivated. My normal way of taking on the world is to prioritize what needs to be done and just start in the morning getting things done. I try not to get sidetracked or lose sight of the goal but lately I am slipping. Aches and pains interfere with the productivity I demand of myself and a long term view makes me even wonder why I'm worried about the perfection I incorporate into everything I do. Between the COVID, flash floods, murder hornets, global warming, civil unrest and a beer shortage, I feel like I should just pull up a chair and wait for one of them to end it all for me. After all, you can only kid yourself for so long before you are insulting your own intelligence. However, where would this country be today if everyone gave up when the going got tough? I'm sure the Panama Canal left a few guys with sore backs. Not to mention malaria yellow fever. They didn't have murder hornets, just mosquitos. The railroads that crisscrossed this country were the dream of someone and the hard work of many made it a reality. I personally feel that they were all disrespected when the railroad management allowed that whole system to fall apart. So today's events are unique but they're not new. They just happen to be what our generation needs to overcome in order to contribute something to the history books. Me slacking off for a few days won't show up and if I don't get the lawn mowed for a whole 2 weeks, I probably won't be mentioned. I'm not worried about saving the country as much as I am worried about my friends and family. Setting an example is the best way to lead and people who never give up give others a reason to go on too. Whether it is a personal tragedy, health problems, natural or man-made disasters, there is no way any of us should let the world whip the fight out of us. We'll all be gone soon enough so find something to believe in and someone to prove your strength to and get on with it. If ten people read this article I have a reason to sit here and write it. It's not always good but it's always real and it keeps my mind working. There are plenty of excuses in this life and I've heard many of them but I refuse to use them to allow myself to be lazy. Get up, get out, get stuff done.

Ken Field is the owner of Slate Belt Energy and Field's Service, Inc. As a certified energy rater and contractor, he is qualified to assess every aspect of energy usage and prescribe solutions to save energy. He can be reached at 610-759-6306 or email Ken@FieldsService.com

## September is National Emergency Preparedness Month

By Michael Ortoski

SLATE BELT - This September, celebrate National Emergency Preparedness Month with us! Preparedness month is a time for families, schools, businesses, and communities to assess their current safety measures and implement new measures or increase awareness. This month, we encourage you to follow these 4 steps from the Department of Homeland Security website for preparing your home or business.

First, make a plan for potential emergencies.

Have a discussion with your family, coworkers, or staff to plan for potential emergencies while everyone is present, and make sure that your plan is clear and easy to understand if you have young children. During this discussion, decide where you will meet in the event that your home or city must be evacuated and/or how you will get in touch with each other. You should also discuss where important emergency supplies – like a fire extinguisher – are located.

Second, assemble a go-bag so you are ready to evacuate your home quickly.

Remember to include a 3 days' supply of non-perishable food and water for each person as well as any necessary medications. One of our subscribers suggests that you also include a list of all doctors that you visit including their addresses, phone numbers and specialties and a document including an emergency contact and the location of important papers such as a living will. Having a go-bag will allow your family to be out the door quickly in the case of a fire or flood and will prevent you from having to return before it is safe to do so. Visit <https://www.ready.gov/kit> for a more complete list of suggested items for your go-bag.

Third, prepare your home for disasters.

When moving to a new area, consider browsing local news or talking with neighbors to determine which disasters your neighborhood is prone to. Once you have this information, you can begin preparing your home or business before disaster strikes. For example, if you live in an area that experiences seasonal hurricanes, you can be sure to secure items like deck furniture or umbrellas and trim tree branches that hang over your house, building or car. These simple measures may prevent damage to your property in the case of heavy winds. You can also use this information to choose the best insurance coverage for your area.

Fourth, teach young children about preparedness.

It's never too early to discuss preparedness with your family. Teaching your children about what to do in an emergency and practicing your family plan will help them stay calm during an actual crisis. It's also important to discuss following the emergency policy at school or in public and when it's a good idea to call 911. Designate one day a year to practicing your emergency protocol and allow your children to ask you questions.

Use this month to ramp up your emergency measures and stock up on supplies to keep you and your family safe. Share your emergency preparedness measures with us on social media using the hashtag #HealthOnWheels and feel free to browse our information for additional emergency-related tips. Finally, help us manage the COVID-19 crisis responsibly by continuing to wear a mask and socially distance in public. Preparedness is a community-wide event!

## JOIN US IN CELEBRATING NATIONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MONTH



Photos taken pre-COVID-19

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*We look forward to seeing you!!!*

Registration also still being accepted for our IN2YouArts Program & our partnership with Central Pennsylvania Digital Learning Foundation!!!

It's a Salvation Army Christmas

Families in need residing in the Slate Belt Area are welcome to apply for assistance with The Salvation Army this Christmas season. We offer a Christmas meal and also gifts for families with children up to Age 14. Legal documentation including a child's Birth Certificate, Legal Guardianship papers, and proof of income for all Adults residing in your home must be provided to benefit from this service.

There will be no exceptions!

Paperwork must be presented at time of interview to be considered

All applications need to be completed by October 22, 2020

To set up an application interview please contact the office at 610-868-6677. Interviews will be held the first 3 weeks in October on the Wednesday and Thursday of each week

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

Anyone in need of assistance that does not call for an application interview within the timeline given will be asked to call after the date of distribution, December 16th to see if there is anything available to assist.

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