

A Tale of Two Towns

Housing for seasonal laborers is often said to be a hardship for employers. H2AUSA has successfully solved the housing problem for their customers. Last year, H2A housed over 700 H2A workers in a turnkey operation. If you feel that housing is a problem, please contact us and we'll work with you in solving your housing dilemma.

Meanwhile, in the latest bills in Congress, an allotment of money is even being considered as a substitution in lieu of housing. Until that time arrives, however, two towns in Indiana have gotten together with a large agricultural concern, Red Gold, Inc., to provide the best solution to the problem.

Red Gold is headquartered in the state and has recently upgraded housing sites in Geneva and Orestes, Indiana with the help of the local officials.

In Orestes, three apartment buildings complete with private bathrooms and kitchenettes have been constructed for seasonal workers at Red Gold with the help of three federal grants of about \$500,000 each that were given to the local town council for its use and then awarded to the corporation.¹

Nearby, the town of Geneva has had a second and third migrant apartment building set up at the Red Gold tomato-processing plant with the help of grants from the Federal Home Loan Bank in Chicago, the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority and even some pitching in by the Habitat for Humanity of Adams County.²

The labor-camp look of huts at one site and trailers at another are a thing of the past. Workers at the site can look at television in air-conditioned comfort at the end of a long work day. Corporate heads are looking to fulfill the expectations of their workers who are annual returnees, coming for years to work for the company.

Offsetting the lack of language skills, the local schools oversee special migrant teaching and offer English proficiency and individual modules, resembling independent studies. Of course, the company itself also profits from the grants and help of the locals. In turn, it supports local infrastructure by upgrading its facilities, hiring local citizens and paying into the local tax base.

It seems that all have gotten something from the deal, including the federal government, which gets a return on its investment when it can see an agricultural region move ahead when others are struggling from the lack of incentive and forward-thinking.

All have struck gold at Red Gold, apparently.

¹ "Migrant workers enjoy new accommodations, courtesy of Red Gold," by Jessica Kerman for The Herald Bulletin – 8/4/2007
at: http://www.theheraldbulletin.com/archivesearch/local_story_216184210.html

² "Red Gold thanked for caring," by Eric Mann for the Decatur Daily Democrat –
at:
http://www.decaturdailydemocrat.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=7686&Itemid=27