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AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK VISITS UTAH USDA EMPLOYEES

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack stopped by for a short visit with USDA employees housed in the Bennett Federal Building in Salt Lake City last Tuesday morning on his way from the Western Governor's Association meeting in Park City. The accompanying photo shows NRCS



Agency were on hand to have their photo taken with the Secretary and to hear his informal comments to the group that met in the large USDA conference room.

Secretary Vilsack encouraged the employees to expand their view of the important role the Agriculture Department plays in the lives of all Americans. He noted that the "everyday, everyway department" helps meet the nutritional needs of needy Americans as well as coordinating agricultural missions in many countries worldwide. He noted that the President was even surprised to learn that the department assists many citizens with low cost home loans. Noting the role of NRCS, he praised the conservation work of our agency on private working lands.

A few USDA employees attended a session at the Western Governor's Association meeting on energy policy and global warming. Secretary Vilsack was joined by Energy Secretary Steven Chu and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar as they made presentations and answered questions from the governors. One of the projects Secretary Vilsack spoke about was a wood-to-energy

and biomass utilization effort being funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

To learn more about this meeting and the Western Governor's Association, visit their Web site at <http://www.westgov.org/>.

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