

Feds award three grants

By **MICHELLE FIRESTONE**
Chronicle Staff Writer

WINDHAM/WILLIMANTIC — Two local organizations will benefit from grant funding provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Grant awards were announced last week for the Commercially Licensed Cooperative Kitchen (CLiCK) in Windham and the Windham Regional Community Council.

“I think that’s spectacular news,” Windham Town Manager Neal Beets said this morning. “This is very good news for the town and

I’m sure they will do very good things with the grant money.”

Windham Mayor Ernest Eldridge agreed.

“I think that the grants recognize the efforts of people in the community who are trying to do the best for people in the community,” he said.

CLiCK was awarded a \$98,110 grant.

The organization will use the funds to market its facilities at 41 Club Road in Windham to local farmers and local culinary entrepreneurs.

“It’s almost like an incubator,”

Eldridge said, describing what the organization does.

He explained businesses that are starting out can pay a fee and use the facilities to produce their products.

“Hopefully what will happen is these small businesses will grow and someone else can come along (and use CLiCK facilities),” Eldridge said.

Meanwhile, the Windham Regional Community Council in Willimantic was awarded an \$88,869 grant for promotion and vendor development related to the

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Willimantic Farmers Market.

In addition to several other community roles, the WRCC was involved in setting up the farmers market, which began in 1973.

The council also provides various services for locals, including youth services, HIV and AIDS education, housing programs and immunization.

“They handle a whole variety of human service-type issues,” said Beets.

According to Beets, the farmers market has been operating at a pavilion across the street from Jillson Square.

WRCC was also awarded a nearly \$25,000 grant that will fund efforts to end food insecurity and hunger among low-income populations through the Community Food Projects grant program.

The grant program is authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Farm Bill) and

funds are distributed through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

For more information about CLiCK, visit clickwillimantic.com or call (860) 455-8395. For more information about the Windham Regional Community Council (WRCC), visit www.wrccinc.org or call the office at (860) 423-4534. WRCC’s office is located at 872 Main St. in Willimantic. The office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.