



Embassy of the United States of America Public Affairs Section

For more information please contact the Information Office at 216-8122, Fax 216-8622

Embassy Website: <http://bolivia.usembassy.gov>

Four Bridges in Alto Beni Delivered Under the Integrated Development Program

On March 23, the Bolivian Vice Minister of Coca and Integrated Development German Loza, Vice Minister of Social Defense Felipe Caceres, and the acting Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy William Mozdierz visited the Alto Beni region to deliver four bridges in the town of Palos Blancos.

These four bridges were built in response to a need identified by the City of Palos Blancos and other beneficiary communities. This construction project was carried out by Caminos Vecinales, the entity responsible for implementing this effort on the part of the Government of Bolivia. This entity depends on the Vice Ministry of Coca and Integrated Development. Approximately 623 families in 16 communities within the municipality will benefit from the bridges. The total cost of the bridges is estimated at \$417,166 and includes contributions from USAID, the City of Palos Blancos and the communities. From 2006 to 2009, Caminos Vecinales has helped to maintain or improve 504 kilometers of roads and has built 26 bridges in the Palos Blancos region with an approximate investment of \$2.3 million.

The improvement and maintenance of secondary roads are crucial activities to improve the diversified social and economic development in this important agricultural region, especially for the production of cocoa and bananas, whose sales have reached almost \$2 million in 2009. The bridges are expected to contribute significantly to increase the cultivation and marketing of agricultural products. Moreover, the new infrastructure will improve access to health, education, and other basic needs in at least 17 communities throughout this region.

This project is part of a bilateral effort to improve production and marketing of agricultural products and to facilitate access to education and health in the Alto Beni region of Bolivia.