

ANALYST UPDATE

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August 18, 2010 - RUS and NTIA Announce 94 New Broadband Awards

Vice President Biden announced 94 Recovery Act investments in broadband projects that will create jobs and expand economic opportunities within 37 states. These investments in high-speed Internet infrastructure will help bridge the technological divide in communities that are being left in the 20th century economy and support improvements in education, healthcare, and public safety. Today's announcement, an investment totaling \$1.8 billion, is part of a nearly \$7 billion Recovery Act initiative.

"Today's investment in broadband technology will create jobs across the country and expand opportunities for millions of Americans and American companies. In addition to bringing 21st century infrastructure to underserved communities and rural areas, these investments will begin to harness the power of broadband to improve education, health care, and public safety," said Vice President Biden. "The awards are another great example of how the Recovery Act is creating jobs upfront, while also building a foundation for sustainable job creation and global competitiveness."

The projects receiving funds today are part of a program – administered by the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) – to expand broadband access and adoption across the country.

"The broadband investments announced today are going to put people to work in the near term, but they also will lay the groundwork for sustainable economic growth down the road," U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke said. "These projects will connect Americans who have for too long been without the full economic, educational and social benefits of high-speed Internet access – access central to success in the 21st Century."

"The broadband projects announced today will give rural Americans access to the tools they need to attract new businesses, jobs, health care and educational opportunities," Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack said. "The Obama Administration understands that bringing broadband to rural America provides a gateway for businesses and key anchor institutions – such as libraries, schools, public safety and community centers – to provide services to thousands of Americans. These projects will create jobs building these networks, and the completed systems will provide a platform for rural economic growth for years to come."

Today's announcement includes 66 grants awarded by the Commerce Department for projects to deploy broadband infrastructure and connect community anchor institutions to broadband, create and upgrade public computer centers, and encourage the sustainable adoption of broadband service. It also includes 28 awards from USDA for broadband infrastructure and satellite projects that will provide rural residents in 16 states and Native American tribal areas access to improved service.

The Department of Commerce awards also contain grants for public safety broadband networks that will improve response times and communication at the scene of emergencies. These projects constitute a critical set of demonstration projects and a head start on President Obama's commitment to support the development of a nationwide, interoperable public safety wireless broadband network.