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SCHNEIDER ANNOUNCES BROADBAND RECOVERY DOLLARS FOR BEK COMMUNICATIONS COOPERATIVES AND HALSTAD TELEPHONE COMPANY

Recovery Act funding brings broadband services to rural un-served and underserved communities

BISMARCK, January 27, 2010 - USDA Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider today announced two Recovery Act Broadband Infrastructure projects, BEK Communications Cooperative Burleigh County and Halstad Telephone Company Traill County, selected to receive funding made available by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

BEK Communications Cooperative, Burleigh County, will receive a \$1,986,473 grant, a \$2,016,571 loan and \$2,016,572 in leveraged funds. The funding will provide fiber-to-the-premises broadband service to underserved homes and anchor institutions. This will aid business growth and support public safety in rural areas highly dependent on Internet business income.

Halstad Telephone Company, Traill County, will receive a \$2,027,600 grant, a \$2,027,600 loan, and \$10,000 in leveraged funds. The funding will provide fiber-to-the premises broadband service to unserved homes and businesses in Traill County.

“The Obama Administration will strengthen communities in rural areas through these broadband investments and provide employment opportunities, building a solid foundation for future economic growth,” Vilsack said. “The awards for these broadband projects will support anchor institutions – such as libraries, public buildings and community centers – that are necessary for the viability of rural communities.”

Funding of individual recipients is contingent upon their meeting the terms of the loan, grant or loan/grant agreement.

In Fiscal Year 2009, USDA Rural Development provided \$56.4 million in housing programs, \$79.7 million in business and community programs, and \$647.1 million in electric programs to North Dakota citizens.