



# NEWS RELEASE

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## USDA Rural Development and Maine Public Broadcasting Unveil Plans for \$750,000 in Upgrades at Ceremony with Area Schools



*Above: Cutting a Ribbon on a large map depicting upgrades to MPBN infrastructure are: MPBN Vice President of Radio and Television Charles Beck; MPBN Chief Technology Officer Gil Maxwell; Office of Senator Angus S. King, Jr., Regional Representative Elizabeth Schneider MacTaggart; USDA Rural Development State Director Virginia Manuel; Office of Senator Susan M. Collins State Office Representative Carol Woodcock; and Office of Congressman Michael H. Michaud Intern Melissa Denner*

**BANGOR**, January 29, 2013 – In a Television Studio packed with New England School of Communications students, Bangor area middle school students, and MPBN staff, USDA Rural Development State Director Virginia Manuel and MPBN Vice President of Radio and Television Charles Beck announced \$750,000 in funding to improve the station's infrastructure across the state.

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The Digital Transition Grant in the amount of \$750,000 will replace old analog microwave equipment. Specifically the project will replace 26 analog microwave transmitters and 28 microwave receivers in the summer of 2013, making current services much more reliable and less affected by weather and other atmospheric conditions which can sometimes affect the relay of information between transmitters.

USDA Rural Development State Director Virginia Manuel said, “I am pleased USDA Rural Development can assist Maine Public Broadcasting Network in updating its aging analog transmitters and receivers. These upgrades will ensure MPBN has the reliable equipment it needs to provide its valuable educational, cultural, and local programming that enriches the lives of many Maine viewers, including our rural viewers.”

“With tight financial constraints on capital replacement costs, this is a welcomed investment in our core infrastructure,” notes MPBN President and CEO Mark Vogelzang. “As Maine’s premier, independent, public media resource, we are a listener and viewer supported organization and this grant from the USDA Rural Development team is truly a gift to all of Maine.”

Students learned from MPBN Chief Technology Officer Gil Maxwell how the equipment works and why it is so essential that it works properly, and gained a first-hand look at the technology and skills needed to be radio broadcasters, programmers, or other positions at a state-of-the-art broadcasting station.

USDA Rural Development has provided \$3.28 million in the past decade to invest in MPBN including computer equipment, software, upgrades to High Definition. The Network received one out of only 10 of these Grants funded in the country under this announcement.

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