



Committed to the future of rural communities.

Michigan—Rural Utilities Service

# Broadband & Continuous Business Creation

## USDA Funds Broadband Linkage In Michigan Thumb Region

### Outline Of Need:

Michigan's Thumb region has some of the worst internet interconnectivity in the United States. This lack of broadband internet access acts as a barrier to education, medical treatment and economic growth.

### How Rural Development Helped:

Rural Development provided a \$32,300,000 loan and \$31,950,000 grant to place more than 500 miles of high-speed fiber optic cable to connect 200 towers through Bay, Genesee, Huron, Lapeer, Livingston, Macomb, Midland, Oakland, Saginaw, Sanilac, Shiawassee, St. Clair, and Tuscola counties.

The funds were awarded through the Broadband Initiative Program.

### Fast Facts

**Program:** Rural Utilities Service  
**Investment:** \$64 million Loan and Grant

Congressional District: MI-1,4,5,8,10

**Partners:** Air Advantage LLC, \$10.2 million in private investment

#### Demographics

- Homes passed: more than 279,000

#### Impact:

- Will connect 23 schools, 3 intermediate school districts
- 21,000 businesses passed

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Left to right) Dave Simmet, Leroy Koglin, Dawn Zimmer, Scott Zimmer and USDA Rural Development Director for Michigan James J. Turner. (USDA photo)

### The Results:

Area businesses are already benefitting from the improvement in connectivity. Located east of Flint and north of metro Detroit, this area plays a tremendous role in the state's agricultural economy and tourism.

For example, the town of Frankenmuth is a major tourist attraction. Known as "Michigan's Little Bavaria," the German-themed village is host to a variety of specialty shops.

The broadband connection is allowing business to improve their marketing. Previously, online sales were difficult due to slow download speeds, but now retailers are able to market their goods to the entire world.

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