



NEWS RELEASE

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Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Announces Recovery Act Broadband Projects to Bring Jobs, Economic Opportunity to Rural Communities

WASHINGTON - September 13, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced the funding of 43 new broadband infrastructure projects that will create jobs and provide rural residents in 27 states and Native American tribal areas access to improved Internet service. Funding is provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act).

"The broadband projects announced today will give rural Americans access to the tools they need to create jobs and access improved health care and educational opportunities," Vilsack said. "These projects will not only create jobs for the people who will build these networks, the completed systems will provide a platform for rural economic growth for years to come. 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."

For example, in West Virginia, Spruce Knob Seneca Rocks Telephone, Inc., will receive \$8,529,310 broadband funding. This approximately \$8.5 million award will allow Spruce Knob Seneca Rocks Telephone, Inc., to offer FTTP fiber-optic capacity, with associated wireless capability, to provide last-mile broadband service in Pendleton and Pocahontas Counties. Fiber-optic cables will be placed on existing power and telephone pole structures along the main arteries and on existing laterals to reach the customers with broadband service speeds of up to 1 Gbps. Approximately 6,378 people stand to benefit, as do roughly 207 businesses and 23 community institutions. In addition to the more than 125 jobs the company estimates this project will create, it will provide a foundation for economic growth and job creation for decades to come.

In Louisiana, Pride Network, Inc. will receive an \$18.4 million loan and a \$17.7 million grant to deploy a Fiber-to-the-Premises (FTTP) network to bring broadband service to St. Helena, Washington, and Tangipahoa Parishes. The project will benefit approximately 25,000 residents, 3,000 businesses and about 200 community facilities. The company estimates the project will create 1,300 jobs.

In Washington State, EcliptixNet Broadband, Inc. will receive a \$6.1 million loan and a \$14.3 million grant to provide high-speed broadband service to rural portions of Ferry, Stevens and

Committed to the future of rural communities.

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Spokane counties. Upgraded service will be available to over 68,000 residents, 3,600 businesses and 300 community facilities. The company estimates the project will create 230 jobs.

In all, \$518 million will be invested in the 43 broadband infrastructure projects with funding made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act). An additional \$34.1 million in private investment will also be committed to the projects. By leveraging \$2.5 billion in Recovery Act funding authorized by Congress, USDA has been able to provide loans and grants of \$3.6 billion to construct 307 broadband projects in 46 states and one territory.

Funding is contingent upon the recipient meeting the terms of the loan, grant or loan/grant agreement. A complete list of projects receiving Recovery Act broadband grant awards today can be viewed in full [HERE](#).

According to analysis released by the National Economic Council last year, overall Recovery Act investments in broadband are expected to create tens of thousands of jobs in the near term and expand economic development and job opportunities in communities that would otherwise be left behind in the new knowledge-based economy. Recovery Act broadband projects help bring down the cost of private investment, attract Internet service providers to new areas, improve digital literacy among students and workers, and help create new opportunities in employment, education, and entrepreneurship by wiring homes and businesses. With new or increased broadband access, communities can compete on a level playing field to attract new businesses, schools can create distance learning opportunities, medical professionals can provide cost-efficient remote diagnoses and care, and business owners can expand the market for their products beyond their neighborhoods to better compete in the global economy.

President Obama signed The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 into law on Feb. 17, 2009. It is designed to jumpstart the nation's economy, create or save millions of jobs, and put a down payment on addressing long-neglected challenges so our country can thrive in the 21st century. The Act includes measures to modernize our nation's infrastructure, enhance energy independence, expand educational opportunities, preserve and improve affordable health care, provide tax relief, and protect those in greatest need.

More information about USDA's Recovery Act efforts is available at www.usda.gov/recovery. More information about the Federal government's efforts on the Recovery Act is available at <http://www.recovery.gov/>.

USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, administers and manages more than 40 housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs through a national network of 6,100 employees located in 500 state and local offices. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of more than \$142 billion in loans and loan guarantees.

Rural Development serves as the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers program assistance through its housing, business, community and infrastructure

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