



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS \$1 MILLION ‘COMMUNITY CONNECT’ GRANT TO BRING BROADBAND TO TATITLEK**

For Immediate Release

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PALMER, Alaska—July 29, 2008-- USDA Rural Development today announced that the community of Tatitlek, Alaska will receive broadband service through a \$1 million dollar “Community Connect” grant. Tatitlek is a traditional coastal village on Prince William Sound, with an estimated 96 percent of the population being Alaska Natives. Under the terms of the grant, the recipient, Copper Valley Telephone Cooperative of Valdez will provide free broadband service to the local clinic and community center for two years.

Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas C. Dorr today announced the selection of 25 communities in 16 states, including Alaska to receive a total of \$15.6 million in broadband community connect grants. "These funds will provide a critical link between essential community facilities in areas where no broadband service currently exists," said Dorr. "The grants will be used to improve public safety and enable residents to pursue on-line educational opportunities."

“Broadband service is vital to rural Alaska communities. It opens the door to health and educational opportunities. It also makes it more likely that community residents can use Internet services for commerce. Programs like this one reduce community isolation and improve the quality of rural life,” said Acting Alaska Rural Development State Director Chad Padgett.

Since the start of the Bush Administration, eight “Community Connect” grants totaling almost \$3.8 million have been awarded to communities in Alaska. Previous community recipients include Angoon, Anvik, Hughes, Kake, Kasaan, Nuiqsut, and Ruby. The Community Connect program serves rural communities where broadband service is least likely to be available, but where it can make a tremendous difference in the quality of life for citizens. The projects funded by these grants will help rural residents tap into the enormous potential of the Internet.

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