



NEWS RELEASE



United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES RED RIVER BROADBAND PROJECT

Schneider: High-speed Internet for south eastern ND to bring jobs, economic opportunity to North Dakota

BISMARCK, N.D., September 13, 2010 - USDA Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider today announced that Red River Rural Telephone Association will receive more than \$9 million in Recovery Act funds to provide better access to broadband, creating jobs and expanding economic opportunities.

"By investing in broadband infrastructure, we are able to build a strong foundation for economic growth making it more attractive to live and work in North Dakota," said Schneider. "The project announced today will give rural communities the resources they need to bring in new businesses, jobs, health care and educational opportunities."

This \$9,088,438 award, matched by \$1 million in private contribution, will allow Red River Rural Telephone Association, Inc., to offer Fiber-To-The-Premise broadband service speeds of up to 100 megabits per second. The project will install 690 route miles of fiber-optic cable to serve six rural exchanges in Ransom, Richland, and Sargent Counties in North Dakota as well as Wilkin County in Minnesota, and Roberts and Marshall Counties in South Dakota. Approximately 2,600 people stand to benefit, as do roughly 228 businesses and six community institutions. In addition, the company estimates that this project will create 110 jobs upfront.

"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 - to provide services to thousands of Americans," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "These projects will create jobs building these networks, and the completed systems will provide a platform for rural economic growth for years to come."

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.

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.

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

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Committed to the future of rural communities.

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