

# Rural Communities Are Connected

**Outline of Need:** Allo Communications, LLC based in Imperial, Nebraska is a facilities-based competitive local exchange carrier offering local, long-distance and broadband data services. Allo needed to restructure existing debt and to purchase additional equipment to expand services in Scottsbluff, Gering, Alliance and Ogallala.

## How Rural Development Helped:

Allo was assisted by USDA Rural Development, through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), by way of the Business and Industry Loan Guarantee program which provided Adams Bank & Trust in Imperial, Nebraska a 90 percent guarantee on a \$5.7 million loan. A USDA Rural Development subsequent loan guarantee of \$1.07 million with a 70 percent guarantee was provided for additional expansion.



*Allo's retail store in Scottsbluff, NE*

**The Results:** Allo's services include commercial and residential telephone, internet and newly added video services. Customers include health care facilities, banks, small businesses, agribusinesses and private citizens. Allo's expanded services are providing opportunities that include better health care in rural Nebraska as well as access to video auctions for livestock producers.

Chief Operating Officer Jim Parks, Box Butte General Hospital, Alliance, Nebraska, shares how Allo's services have helped improve health care in Western Nebraska. "The upgrade in communications technology made available by Allo Communications has made a significant difference in Box Butte General Hospital's ability to care for patients in a timely manner. Prior to the availability of the 10mbs Ethernet line between Box Butte General Hospital and Regional West Medical Center in Scottsbluff it took as long as 45 minutes to send a CT scan series of images to be evaluated by a Radiologist. In many trauma situations, and especially with stroke patients, this time can mean the difference between life and death. With the vastly improved transmission times resulting from the installation of the fiber connection, the images can be evaluated immediately and appropriate care started in a timely manner. This technology brings the quality and availability of big city health care to rural areas."

Owner Jerry Weekes, Platte Valley Livestock, said, “The speed and quality of service allows my business to be in the game. The upgraded service enables Platte Valley Livestock to provide livestock producers with an online market to sell their product via the internet and video services.” Glitches in the feed could be detrimental to Weekes’ business and his customers.

The opportunities to be connected from Western Nebraska rival those in the big city.

Allo impacts the employment in the area, and has been successful in attracting former residents back to the communities it serves. Allo in Imperial has attracted eight people back to the community’s employment roster; Scottsbluff has attracted two and Ogallala, one person. The company has also provided additional benefits to Imperial. Three new businesses have been started by Allo employees or former employees. Imperial’s population has also been enhanced, with 22 babies born to Allo employees.

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