



NEWS RELEASE

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\$30 Million in Broadband Funding Awarded to Four States *Ohio Secures More Than \$6 Million as its Share of National Financing*

COLUMBUS, OHIO, OCTOBER 19, 2006 – Ohio joined three other states in sharing \$30 million in funding from USDA Rural Development's Broadband Access and Telecommunications Program. Ohio's share of the funding totals \$6,167,000 and goes to McClure Telephone Company in Henry County.

"This is Ohio's second Broadband award and we've been working towards building some momentum in this program," said State Director Randy Hunt. "Navigating the program's requirements is a detailed-oriented endeavor, but the resulting service improvements more than reward the effort."

USDA Rural Development's Telecommunications program creates public-private partnerships to finance the construction of telecommunications infrastructure in rural America. Rural Development makes loans to finance the improvement, expansion, construction, or acquisition of telecommunications facilities in rural areas.

The McClure Telephone Company of McClure, Ohio, will use the Broadband loan to construct a fiber to the home system throughout their exchange in Henry County, providing service to 245 data, 808 voice and 256 video subscribers.

"Here at the McClure Telephone Company we're very excited; not only for us but more for our customers," said McClure Telephone Company's General Manager Duane Schroeder. "With the approval of this Rural Development Broadband Loan we will be able to build a Fiber Optic Network capable of delivering "Triple Play" (voice, video, and Internet) services to our customers that are second to none, competitively priced and available on one bill from one company. As an independent telephone company, we pride ourselves on the quality of service we provide to our customers. The Fiber-to-the-Home network we will build with these funds will enable the McClure Telephone Company to continue our commitment to quality for years to come."

USDA Rural Development's Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee program provides loans and loan guarantees for the construction, improvement, and acquisition of facilities and equipment for broadband service in eligible rural communities. Priority is given to applications that are proposed to serve areas where no residential broadband service currently exists.

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Committed to the future of rural communities.

"USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender."

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The program was authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill and 62 loans for more than \$1.1 billion have been made since the program was created.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in rural communities. Rural Development accomplishes this by providing equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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