



United States Department of Agriculture
Rural Development
San Juan, PR

NEWS RELEASE

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USDA ANNOUNCES AVAILABILITY OF \$13.4 MILLION IN COMMUNITY CONNECT GRANTS

WASHINGTON, April 29, 2009 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced the availability of \$13.4 million in Community Connect grants for rural areas currently without broadband service.

“USDA’s Community Connect Program enhances economic development in rural areas and connects residents to health, educational and business information through high-speed internet,” Vilsack said. “These grants will generate returns for many years to come.” The program is a key component of President Obama’s initiative to improve the availability of broadband service in rural communities.

Community Connect grants are available in the most rural, economically challenged areas where loans are not sustainable. Eligible applicants include state and local governments, corporations and Indian tribes.

Pedro Gómez, USDA Rural Development Acting State Director for Puerto Rico, indicated that the grants will range from \$50,000.00 to \$1 million. Applications for grants are due by the close of business of June 19, 2009. Please see the April 20, 2009, Federal Register, page 17941. The application guide for this grant program can be found at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/commconnect/2009/2009commconnectappguide.pdf>.

USDA Rural Development’s mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development fosters growth in homeownership, finances business development and supports the creation of critical community and technology infrastructure. Additional information on the Rural Programs can be obtained by visiting USDA’s web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov> or by calling María de los A de Jesús, (787) 766-5095 ext. 251 or Miguel A. Ramírez at ext. 232. USDA Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities.

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