

USDA/Rural Development

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News Release

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USDA AWARDS \$32.4 MILLION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS FOR EDUCATION AND MEDICAL SERVICE

WASHINGTON, Sept. 30, 2003— Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced the selection of 84 Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) grants totaling more than \$32 million, providing greater educational opportunities and medical service to rural citizens in 41 states.

“The Bush Administration recognizes the importance of technology in bringing new resources to rural America,” said Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman. “These grants will help expand the availability of state of the art health care and educational resources to rural families.”

In total, 57 distance education grants for \$23.5 million, and 27 telemedicine grants for more than \$ 8.9 million were selected for funding. The education projects will help 556 schools provide students with educational tools to better equip them for the global digital economy. Additionally, rural residents will have access to better, faster and more modern health care through 190 medical service facilities. A complete list of the selected grant recipients can be found at the USDA Rural Development web site at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>

“Information technology is critical to rural Americans. It significantly improves the quality of their health care and their ability to receive access to educational programs that prepare them for a competitive future,” said Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas C. Dorr.

“Everyone who has played a role in extending telecommunications service to rural Texans should be very proud of what has been accomplished,” said Bryan Daniel, State Director for Texas USDA Rural Development. “The communication lines you help build and maintain are truly the life lines of the nation’s rural heartland.”

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development provides 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 www.rurdev.usda.gov.

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