



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
101 South Main • Suite 102 • Temple, TX 76501

Phone: (254) 742-9700 • Fax: (254) 742-9709 • TDD: (254) 742-9712 • Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tx>

Date: October 6, 2004

Contact Name: Scooter Brockette

Telephone Number: 254-742-9700

Email: Scooter.Brockette@tx.usda.gov

TX 006.05

USDA ANNOUNCES \$95.2 MILLION IN LOANS TO INCREASE RURAL ACCESS TO HI-SPEED INTERNET TECHNOLOGY

TEMPLE, Texas, October 6, 2004 - Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced the approval of \$95.2 million in Rural Development broadband loans. The \$95.2 million investment is expected to expand access to high-speed Internet technology for over 46,000 additional homes and businesses in several rural communities throughout the nation. In Texas, ETS Telephone Company & Subsidiaries of Houston, Texas, has been approved for a \$22.7 million loan to provide over 24,000 households and businesses in Fort Bend and Harris Counties access to broadband services.

“These investments are bringing new economic opportunity and a better quality of life to rural communities,” said Veneman. “These loans are part of President Bush’s efforts to expand universal access to broadband technologies to every home in America by the year 2007.”

“These funds are part of the Bush Administration’s commitment to work in partnership with the private sector to bring universal access to broadband technologies to rural communities,” said Acting Under Secretary for Rural Development Gilbert Gonzalez.

“The funding of these two projects in Texas will give the rural residents access to modern technology and telecommunications services,” said Bryan Daniel, Texas USDA Rural Development State Director. “These programs are among many that USDA Rural Development can utilize in our ongoing commitment to the future of rural communities.”

Funding for each of the loans announced will be contingent upon meeting the conditions of the loan agreements. USDA provides a number of other important tools to advance broadband service in rural America, including the Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant program which provides advance technologies for educational and health care needs.

Since the beginning of the Bush Administration, over \$3.2 billion in telecommunication funding has provided more than a million rural homes and businesses with access to high speed broadband connections.

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 the web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

#

Committed to the future of rural communities.

“USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.”
To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD).