



# NEWS RELEASE

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

Phone: (254) 742-9710, Ext. 4 • Fax: (254) 742-9709 • TDD: (254) 742-9700 • Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tx>

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Date: December 6, 2005  
Release Number TX 446.05

Contact Name: Gayle Cargo  
Telephone Number: 254-742-9707  
Email: [gayle.cargo@tx.usda.gov](mailto:gayle.cargo@tx.usda.gov)

## USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS \$248,580 FOR THE DISTANCE LEARNING AND TELEMEDICINE PROGRAM

**TEMPLE, TEXAS, December 6, 2005**– Bryan Daniel, State Director of Texas USDA Rural Development, today announced the selection of Ricardo Independent School District as a recipient of the Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program.

The DLT funds will be used to connect Ricardo ISD to other educational service providers via the Internet. Services offered will include interactive distance learning for grades 2-8, interactive career and technology development for grades 5-8, professional development for educators, and distance learning opportunities for community members. The project will serve 750 students, teacher, and residents of the area.

“Distance learning and telemedicine systems are powerful tools for rural Texas,” said Daniel. “Through technology, students and families can participate in classes not previously available to them, and people who live in rural areas can access expanded health care options.”

In Fiscal Year 2004, Texas was awarded \$1.4 million to be distributed through the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program. The education projects helped schools provide students with advanced educational tools. Distance learning projects provide funding for computers and internet connections in schools and libraries. The vast array of study options available to rural students through distance learning technologies literally brings the world to their doorstep. Telemedicine projects are providing new and improved healthcare services beginning with patient diagnosis, through surgical procedures, and post-operative treatment.

USDA Rural Development strives to see that rural citizens can participate fully in the global economy by providing technical assistance, funding, and other programs that help rural Americans build strong economies to improve their quality of life. For further information regarding USDA Rural Development Programs, contact the State Office at (254) 742-9700 or visit our website at <http://rurdev.usda.gov/tx/>.

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