



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
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USDA ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF COMMUNITY CONNECT GRANTS

WASHINGTON—Acting Agriculture Secretary Chuck Conner recently announced the selection of 19 grants in 13 states and American Samoa of \$10.3 million in broadband community connect grants. “The Community Connect program serves rural communities where broadband service is least likely to be available, but where it can make a tremendous difference in the quality of life for citizens,” Conner said. “The projects funded by these grants will help rural residents tap into the enormous potential of the internet.”

“Rural Development in Utah is delighted to provide a grant to Navajo Nation for \$205,416 to build and expand a much needed wireless network”, said Jack Cox, Utah State Director for USDA Rural Development. In Navajo Mountain, Utah, the Smith Bagley, Inc., a CellularOne company, will use the grant to construct the network. This chapter of the Navajo Nation Chapter is the most densely populated, and by far the most isolated. The nearest hospital is over 100 miles away. The grant is expected to fund 10 computers located in the Navajo Mountain Chapter House, which currently houses public meetings, the Navajo Nation Land Administration, the Senior Center, Department of Employment and Training, the Department of Behavioral Health, and the Boys and Girls club. This will allow for easy access to not only residents, but critical facilities in the community. Online educational opportunities, public safety notices, and telemedicine opportunities will be made available through this grant. Bonnie Carrig, USDA-Rural Development Community Programs Director stated, “Since this community is so isolated and without broadband services, we are pleased to partner USDA-Rural Development funds, assisting with basic infrastructure needs to improve health care, education and economic opportunities for the community residents in Navajo Mountain Chapter”.

USDA Rural Development’s mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has invested more than \$76.8 billion since 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than 1.5 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. 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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