

## News Release

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### VENEMAN ANNOUNCES \$11.3 MILLION IN BROADBAND TECHNOLOGY GRANTS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 25, 2003 - Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced yesterday that \$11.3 million in broadband community grants will be awarded to 34 communities in 20 states to enable residents to access the Internet and take advantage of the opportunities available through the global digital community.

“Technology is key to the ability of rural businesses to compete in a global marketplace,” said Veneman. “Extending broadband technology to allow more families and communities to access business, education and health services is part of the Bush Administration’s effort to expand economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in rural America.”

“With the expansion of technology, fewer families will find it necessary to leave their hometowns to find jobs,” said Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas C. Dorr. “Technology can help bring jobs to rural America.”

Communities selected (list located at [www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov)) do not have access to broadband connectivity for the essential services of police and fire protection, hospitals, libraries and schools. In return for receiving a grant, the communities will provide residents with computer and Internet access. The grant program supplements USDA Rural Development’s standard high-speed telecommunications loan program.

**In Washington State, the Town of Concrete is receiving a \$440,000 grant to establish broadband infrastructure in their community. The community broadband network will assist in economic sustainability, enhanced quality of life, and increased community health and security for the rural residents.**

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](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov).

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*discrimination should be sent to: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410*