

July 2, 2010

**SECRETARY LOCKE ANNOUNCES RECOVERY ACT
INVESTMENTS TO EXPAND BROADBAND INTERNET
ACCESS AND SPUR ECONOMIC GROWTH**

News Media Contact:

Shannon Gilson, (202) 482-4883, sgilson@doc.gov

WASHINGTON – U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke today announced 29 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act investments to help bridge the technological divide, boost economic growth, create jobs, and improve education and healthcare across the country. The investments, totaling more than \$404 million in grants, will fund projects that lay the groundwork to bring enhanced high-speed Internet access to millions of households and businesses and link thousands of schools, hospitals, libraries, and public safety offices to the information superhighway.

“In a globalized 21st century economy, when you don’t have regular access to high-speed Internet, you don’t have access to all the educational, business and employment opportunities it provides,” Locke said. “These critical Recovery Act investments will create jobs and lay the groundwork for long-term sustainable economic growth in communities across America.”

The Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s (NTIA) Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), funded by the Recovery Act, provides grants to support the deployment of broadband infrastructure, enhance and expand public computer centers, and encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service.

Today’s announcement begins the second round of BTOP grant awards, which will continue on a rolling basis. In the first round, NTIA awarded 82 BTOP grants worth \$1.2 billion that will expand broadband access and adoption through projects that will affect 45 states and territories. NTIA will announce all grant awards by September 30, 2010.

“We are investing in projects that will have a real, lasting impact on communities across the country. In particular, investing in ‘middle mile’ networks that bring high-speed Internet access to communities and connect key anchor institutions, such as schools, libraries, community colleges and hospitals, to the Internet allows us to get the most bang for every infrastructure grant dollar.” Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator Lawrence E. Strickling said. “The level of interest in this program has been extraordinary, and is yet another indicator of the critical role broadband plays in achieving durable, sustainable economic growth.”

The following grants were announced today:

Comprehensive Community Infrastructure awards:

District of Columbia: Government of the District of Columbia, \$17.5 million grant with an additional \$7.5 million applicant-provided match to deploy a high-speed network to spur improved broadband service for residents and businesses, and provide direct Internet connections for approximately 190 community anchor institutions located predominantly in the city's economically distressed areas.

Iowa: Iowa Communications Network, \$16.2 million grant with an additional \$7.6 million applicant-provided match to upgrade an existing 3,000-mile network to provide 10 Gbps-capable points of presence in each county in the state, while upgrading direct high-speed connections for more than 2,000 community anchor institutions.

Iowa: Iowa Health System, \$17.7 million grant with an additional \$9.9 million applicant-provided match to upgrade and enhance the health system's existing fiber network that provides connections to over 200 healthcare facilities, as well as facilitate more access to broadband service for residents and businesses statewide.

Massachusetts: Massachusetts Technology Park, \$45.4 million grant with an additional \$26.2 applicant-provided match to bring affordable, high-speed Internet access to residents and businesses in western Massachusetts by constructing over 1,300 miles of new fiber and connecting approximately 1,400 community anchor institutions.

Minnesota: Zayo Bandwidth, \$13.4 million grant with an additional \$5.7 million applicant-provided match to fund almost 300 miles of new fiber network to connect 145 community anchor institutions, and make high-speed broadband services available to local Internet service providers in economically distressed counties north of the Twin Cities metro area.

Mississippi: Contact Network, Inc., \$20.7 million grant with an additional \$5.2 million applicant-provided match to deploy more than 600 miles of fiber optic middle mile broadband infrastructure in underserved areas of 16 counties in southern and central Mississippi, providing improved connections for 200 schools, hospitals, public safety facilities and other community anchor institutions in the region.

New Hampshire: University System of New Hampshire, \$44.5 million grant with an additional \$21.4 million applicant-provided match to fund a collaboration between state and local governments, non-profits, and private entities to bring next-generation broadband services to more than 200 community anchor institutions in all ten counties of the Granite State. The project also intends to upgrade the state's existing microwave public safety networks.

Ohio: ComNet, Inc., \$30 million grant with an additional \$12.9 million applicant-provided match to construct almost 700 new miles of high-capacity fiber to expand an existing network throughout 28 western Ohio counties, providing direct connections to approximately 880 schools, government offices, public safety facilities, health care facilities, libraries and public housing facilities.

Oregon: Bend Cable Communications, LLC, \$4.4 million grant with an additional \$1.9 million applicant-provided match to construct more than 130 miles of new fiber in areas of central Oregon that lack adequate broadband connectivity, connecting four local municipalities as well as approximately 20 key health, educational, public safety, and business development entities.

Oregon: County of Clackamas, \$7.8 million grant with an additional \$3.3 million applicant-provided match to bring affordable high-speed Internet service to 150 community anchor institutions and facilitate improved broadband service for local consumers and businesses across this northwestern Oregon county.

Texas: Valley Telephone Cooperative, Inc., \$15.7 million grant with an additional \$6.7 million applicant-provided match to build more than 150 miles of new fiber network in a region of south Texas with chronically high unemployment and a large percentage of minority populations. The project will partner with the University of Texas at Brownsville, UT Pan American, UT Health Service Center, South Texas College, and Texas State Technical College to improve broadband service to each campus, while connecting 30 additional community anchor institutions and enabling more affordable broadband access for local consumers and businesses.

Vermont: Vermont Telecommunications Authority, \$33.4 million grant with an additional \$14.8 million applicant-provided match to build a 790-mile fiber network across this small, rural state with rugged terrain. The project plans to provide direct high-speed connections to as many as 300 anchor institutions statewide, including community colleges and public safety entities, while enabling more affordable broadband access for local consumers and businesses.

Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York: Vermont Telephone Company, \$12.3 million grant with an additional \$5.3 million applicant-provided match to enhance the existing middle mile broadband infrastructure to address a bandwidth and transport capacity shortages and upgrade direct connections to close to 200 community anchor institutions.

Virginia: Bristol Virginia Utilities Board, \$22.7 million grant with an additional \$13.5 million applicant-provided match to build an almost 400-mile fiber network that intends to bring high-speed broadband middle mile service to rural, economically distressed areas in southwestern Virginia.

Wyoming: Silver Star Telephone Company, \$5.6 million grant with an additional \$1.6 million applicant-provided match to close a 90-mile gap in the company's existing statewide fiber optic network, bringing comprehensive broadband services to 11 counties and providing direct connections for approximately 15 community anchor institutions in western Wyoming.

Wyoming and Idaho: Silver Star Telephone Company, \$5 million grant with an additional \$1.3 million applicant-provided match to close a 38-mile gap in its existing 159-mile fiber optic network in northwest Wyoming and southeast Idaho, bringing comprehensive broadband services to five counties in the region and providing direct connections for a dozen community anchor institutions, including Brigham Young University's Idaho campus and Teton National Park service.

All States and the District of Columbia: University Corporation for Advanced Internet Development, \$62.5 million grant with an additional \$34.3 million applicant-provided match to interconnect more than 30 existing research and educational networks, creating a nation-wide high-capacity network that will enable advanced networking features for more than 100,000 essential community anchor institutions.

Public Computer Center awards:

Arizona: Arizona Office of Economic Recovery, \$1.6 million grant with an additional \$706,000 applicant-provided match to expand computer centers at 28 state and tribal libraries and to provide specialized virtual workforce workstations at 200 locations throughout the state.

District of Columbia: Government of the District of Columbia, \$1.6 million grant with an additional \$667,000 applicant-provided match to upgrade connection speeds, provide training, and deploy more than 1,000 new computer workstations at 24 public libraries, two recreation centers, three public schools, and one community college library.

Maine: Maine State Library, \$1.4 million grant with an additional \$589,000 applicant-provided match to upgrade public computer centers at more than 100 public libraries statewide. The project will increase the number of available broadband workstations by as much as 60 percent and improve training and employment-related services offered by libraries.

Minnesota: Leech Lake Reservation Business Committee, \$1.7 million grant with an additional \$790,000 applicant-provided match to create seven new public computer centers and upgrading ten existing facilities on three Indian reservations in Minnesota. The centers will be located at Boys and Girls Clubs within tribally operated community centers, providing public access to all residents.

Montana: Montana State Library, \$1.8 million grant with an additional \$867,000 applicant-provided match to provide more broadband computer access at faster speeds at 42 local libraries in 29 counties across the state within reach of 86 percent of Montana's population.

Nevada: Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs, \$806,000 grant with an additional \$305,000 applicant-provided match to install more than 250 new workstations and expand the training and educational capacity at more than 30 libraries and other hubs for free computer access in 15 counties throughout the state.

New Jersey: Thomas Edison State College, \$5.1 million grant with an additional \$2.4 million applicant-provided match to add computer workstations and/or upgrade connectivity at approximately 125 libraries, as well as provide job search assistance and workforce development programs at 365 libraries across the state.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma City University, \$1.4 million grant with an additional \$747,000 applicant-provided match to expand broadband computer access options for the economically vulnerable community in which the university is located. The project will open two computer

centers with almost 90 workstations to the general public and deploy a “mobile PCC” van with 20 laptops to serve the community at large.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma Department of Libraries, \$2.3 million grant with an additional \$1 million applicant-provided match to upgrade public computer centers at 45 libraries in 44 counties across the state to better equip them to meet local community needs.

Oregon: County of Crook, \$3.9 million grant with an additional \$1.8 million applicant-provided match to build a new, 65-workstation computer learning center in Prineville, the county seat, which will provide education, training, and broadband access to the county’s 25,000 citizens. The project also plans to deploy a mobile lab with satellite connectivity to provide instruction and training to remote areas of the county.

Pennsylvania: City of Philadelphia, \$6.4 million grant with an additional \$3.3 million applicant-provided match to create or enhance more than 75 public computer centers located in North, West, and South Philadelphia, with the goal of providing access for thousands more residents on a weekly basis.

Tennessee: Tennessee State Library & Archives, \$557,000 grant with an additional \$239,000 applicant-provided match to expand 29 public computer centers as part of its Bridging the Gap project, which will leverage the support of local community organizations to provide training and drive participation among patrons in the community.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided a total of \$7.2 billion to NTIA and the Department of Agriculture’s Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to fund projects that will expand access to and adoption of broadband services. NTIA is utilizing \$4.7 billion of that funding for grants to deploy broadband infrastructure in the United States, expand public computer center capacity, and encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service.

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(Fact sheets with further information about all BTOP grants are available on the NTIA program web site here: <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandUSA>)