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**National
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**COMMERCE ANNOUNCES RECOVERY ACT INVESTMENT IN ILLINOIS TO
EXPAND BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS AND SPUR ECONOMIC GROWTH**

*Assistant Secretary Strickling Joins Illinois Governor Quinn, U.S. Rep. Bill Foster to Make
Announcement as the Recovery Act Crosses the One-Year Mark*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) today announced an \$11.9 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) investment to help bridge the technological divide, boost economic growth, create jobs, and improve education and health care in DeKalb County and portions of LaSalle County, Illinois.

“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,” said Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator Lawrence E. Strickling. “Like the grant announced today, the strongest proposals are the ones that have taken a truly comprehensive view of the communities to be served and have engaged as many key members of the communities as possible in developing the projects.”

NTIA’s Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), funded by the Recovery Act, provides grants to support the deployment of broadband infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas, enhance and expand public computer centers, and encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service.

Assistant Secretary Strickling announced the \$11.9 million broadband infrastructure grant for the DeKalb Advancement of Technology Authority Broadband project during an event today with Governor Pat Quinn and U.S. Rep. Bill Foster. This investment will enable the deployment of a 130-mile fiber network across DeKalb County and northern LaSalle County, providing high-speed Internet connections to at least 60 anchor institutions, such as schools, hospitals, libraries, public safety entities, and numerous government agencies.

The project will also:

- Provide network speeds between 10 Mbps to 10 Gbps, enabling connected anchor institutions and other local Internet service providers to extend service to underserved households and businesses in the area.

- Connect local municipalities to one another and provide backbone infrastructure for emergency services and disaster recovery.
- Connect to the Illinois Rural HealthNet, allowing medical facilities connected to this project to collaborate with specialists at larger facilities throughout the state and nation.

NTIA received more than 1,800 applications proposing projects totaling nearly \$19 billion during the first BTOP funding round and is currently awarding grants on a rolling basis. Including the grant announced today, NTIA has now awarded 30 grants totaling more than \$597 million under the program. In addition, NTIA has awarded \$97 million in mapping and planning grants to 51 states and territories. NTIA is currently accepting BTOP applications through March 15, 2010 for a second round of funding.

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. Of that funding, NTIA will utilize \$4.7 billion for grants to deploy broadband infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas in the United States, expand public computer center capacity, and encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service. RUS will use \$2.5 billion in budget authority to support grants and loans to facilitate broadband deployment in primarily rural communities. NTIA will announce all grant awards by September 30, 2010.

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U.S. Department of Commerce's NTIA serves as the Executive Branch agency principally responsible for advising the President on communications and information policy. For further information about NTIA's BTOP grants, please visit <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants>.