

Applications must be submitted in accordance with 7 CFR part 1738. This part and an application guide to assist in the preparation of applications are available in the Internet at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/broadband.htm>. Application guides may also be requested from RUS by contacting the agency contact.

Agency Contacts

For application information, contact the following individual: Kenneth Kuchno, Program Manager "Broadband Program, Telecommunications Program, RUS/USDA, Room 2846, Stop 1599, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-1599, (202) 690-4673.

Eligible Rural Community

The definition of eligible rural community in Section 601(b)(2) of the Rural Electrification Act (7 U.S.C. 950bb)(b)(2), qualifying for financial assistance under the Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guaranty Program, has been amended by provisions in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2004, to mean any area of the United States that is not contained in an incorporated city or town with a population in excess of 20,000 inhabitants. Therefore, an applicant no longer must demonstrate that it is not located in an area designated as a standard metropolitan statistical area. This change supersedes and nullifies contrary provisions in regulations implementing the broadband program found at 7 CFR part 1738.

Minimum and Maximum Loan Amounts

Loans and loan guarantees under this authority will not be made for less than \$100,000. Maximum loan amounts apply only to the direct 4 percent loan program. The maximum amount available for any one applicant for a direct 4 percent loan is \$7,500,000.

Minimum Rate of Data Transmission Criteria

The Secretary of Agriculture determines what qualifies as broadband service for the purpose of determining eligibility for financial assistance under the Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program. During fiscal year 2004, to qualify as broadband service, the minimum rate-of-data transmission shall be 200 kilobits/second in the customer's connection to the network, both from the provider to

the customer (downstream) and from the customer to the provider (upstream).

State Allocations

The annual state allocation will not be made for Fiscal Year 2004. To ensure the obligation of funds by April 1, as required by the Farm Bill, an annual application submission deadline of January 31 for funding from the state allocation reserves was adopted and published in the enacting regulations. With the enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act on January 23, 2004, insufficient time remained for the submission of applications by the regulatory deadline.

4 Percent Direct Loans:

An applicant will be eligible for a direct 4 percent loan if: (1) the community being served has a population of less than 2,500, and is not currently receiving broadband service as defined at § 1738.11(b)(1); (2) the per capita income in the county being served as a percent of national per capita income, is not more than 65 percent of the national per capita income, as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, at www.bea.doc.gov/bea/regional/reis, and using the data for the most recent year published as of the date of application; and (3) the population density, calculated as the total number of persons in the service area divided by the square miles of the service area is not more than 20 persons per square mile.

Dated: March 24, 2004.

Hilda Gay Legg,

Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

International Trade Administration

United States Travel and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board

AGENCY: International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of open meeting.

DATES: April 16, 2004.

TIME: 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

PLACE: Capital Hilton—Senate Room, 1001 16th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20036.

SUMMARY: The United States Travel and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board

("Board") will hold a Board meeting on April 16, 2004 at the Capital Hilton Hotel.

The Board will discuss the design, development and subsequent implementation of an international advertising and promotional campaign, which will seek to encourage individuals from the United Kingdom to travel to the United States for the express purpose of engaging in tourism. The meeting will be open to the public. Time will be permitted for public comment. To sign up for public comment, please contact Julie Heizer by 5 p.m. EDT Wednesday, April 14, 2004. She may be contacted at U.S. Department of Commerce, 1401 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room 7025, Washington, DC 20230; via fax at (202) 482-2887; or, via e-mail at promotion@tinnet.ita.doc.gov.

Written comments concerning Board affairs are welcome any time before or after the meeting. Written comments should be directed to Julie Heizer. Minutes will be available within 90 days of this meeting.

The Board is mandated by Pub. L. 108-7, Section 210. As directed by Pub. L. 108-7, Section 210, the Secretary of Commerce shall design, develop and implement an international advertising and promotional campaign, which seeks to encourage individuals to travel to the United States. The Board shall recommend to the Secretary of Commerce the appropriate coordinated activities for funding. This campaign shall be a multi-media effort that seeks to leverage the Federal dollars with contributions of cash and in-kind products unique to the travel and tourism industry. The Board was chartered in August of 2003 and will expire on August 8, 2005.

For further information, phone Julie Heizer, Office of Travel and Tourism Industries (OTTI), International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce at (202) 482-0140. This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to OTTI.

Dated: March 23, 2004.

Julie Heizer,

Deputy Director for Industry Relations, Office of Travel and Tourism Industries.

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