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## U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**USTDA GRANTS FURTHER E-GOVERNMENT AND  
AVIATION PRIORITIES IN THE STATE OF MINAS GERAIS**  
*Three Grants Totaling Over \$1.2 Million Awarded This Week in Brazil*

BELO HORIZONTE, BRAZIL (September 19, 2008) – Establishing e-government and aviation infrastructure to support economic growth in the State of Minas Gerais in Brazil, is the goal of two separate USTDA grants awarded today. One grant was awarded to the State’s Economic Development Secretariat to further the development of an administrative data center. The other grant was awarded to the Transport and Public Works Secretariat for the expansion of the PROAERO Small Airports Network Program.

“The State of Minas Gerais is committed to establishing the necessary infrastructure to support its development,” said USTDA Director Larry W. Walther. “E-government initiatives, such as the datacenter that the State is pursuing, will optimize efficiency and strengthen the state’s capacity to promote growth. Meanwhile, expanding the PROAERO program will enhance regional aviation interconnectivity.”

The grants were conferred during a signing ceremony held at the Governor’s office in the State of Minas Gerais. Director Walther signed both grants on behalf of the U.S. Government. Minas Gerais Governor Aécio Neves and Secretary of Development Rafael Guimarães Andrade signed both grants. Minas Gerais Secretary of Planning Renata Maria Paes de Vilhena also signed the grant in support of the PROAERO program. U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Clifford Sobel and Brazilian Under Secretary for International Affairs Luiz Antonio Athayde signed as witnesses to the grant agreements.

The \$425,000 USTDA grant to the Economic Development Secretariat will assist in the establishment of an administrative datacenter that will upgrade and consolidate the datacenters of various state government secretariats. This project is seen as an important tool for the socio-economic development of the region and is a top priority for the state.

The second USTDA grant awarded today in the amount of \$241,000 will help to expand the PROAERO Small Airports Network Program (PROAERO). PROAERO was established in 1990 to promote safety standards and economic development through an integrated network of paved and unpaved airports in the State of Minas Gerais.

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PROAERO now seeks to expand the program in order to accommodate greater intrastate and interstate civil aviation interconnection. The grant awarded today will further this objective by providing the Secretariat with the basis for future capital expenditures, equipment procurement specifications, financing options, and program implementation.

In addition to the grants awarded today in the State of Minas Gerais, USTDA awarded a \$573,853 grant yesterday in the State of Acre in Brazil. The grant will be used to evaluate a statewide broadband project.

The opportunities to provide USTDA-funded assistance to the Economic Development Secretariat and the Transport and Public Works Secretariat will be competed separately on the Federal Business Opportunities website at [www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov). Interested U.S. firms should submit proposals according to the instructions in the Federal Business Opportunities announcements. The Economic Development Secretariat and the Transport and Public Works Secretariat will each select the U.S. firms that will carry out the assistance associated with their respective grants.

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency advances economic development and U.S. commercial interests in developing and middle-income countries. The agency funds various forms of technical assistance, early investment analysis, training, orientation visits and business workshops that support the development of a modern infrastructure and a fair, open trading environment. USTDA's strategic use of foreign assistance funds to support sound investment policy and decision-making in host countries creates an enabling environment for trade, investment and sustainable economic development. In carrying out its mission, USTDA gives emphasis to economic sectors that may benefit from U.S. exports of goods and services.