



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA ANNOUNCES \$462 MILLION IN RURAL BROADBAND, TELECOMMUNICATIONS LOANS

WASHINGTON, Oct. 23, 2008 – Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas Dorr today announced that broadband and telecommunications loans totaling more than \$462 million are being awarded to 19 communications firms serving 19 states. The funds will help bring new and improved telecommunications services to rural residents and businesses.

“The funding announced today will provide more rural Americans with high-quality, affordable broadband services,” Dorr said. “State-of-the-art communications services in rural areas promote business development, increase job opportunities and improve access to educational services.”

For example, in Medicine Park, Okla., Wichita Online, Inc. will use a four million dollar loan to expand the company’s existing wireless broadband network. The upgrades will allow the company to service 104,562 households and 2,306 businesses throughout 51 communities in southwest Oklahoma. In Sebeka, Minn., West Central Telephone Association was selected to receive a \$22.2 million loan to provide new and improved service and deploy 44 new route miles of fiber and copper cable, modify 992 miles of existing buried cable and construct a new central office.

The loans are being made through the Rural Development Broadband Loan and Loan Guarantee Program, which provides low-interest loans to deploy broadband and telecommunications services to rural communities of 20,000 residents or less, with first priority going to areas without broadband; and through the Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program, which makes loans to local firms working to provide both voice and broadband services in areas with 5,000 or fewer citizens.

Funding to each recipient is contingent upon its meeting the conditions of the loan agreement. The following is a complete list of loan recipients:

Broadband and Telecommunications Loan Recipients 2008

State (s)	Borrower	Loan Amount
AL	Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc.	\$23,988,000
CA, NV, AZ	Fort Mojave Telecommunications, Inc.	\$16,900,000
CO, KS, NM, TX	Stelera Wireless	\$35,499,000
IA	Colo Telephone Company	\$1,993,000
IA	Martelle Cooperative Telephone Association	\$2,082,000
IA	BTC, Inc.	\$10,000,000

Committed to the future of rural communities.

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IN	Smithville Telephone Company, Incorporated	\$90,181,000
MN	West Central Telephone Association	\$22,200,000
MN, IA	Spring Grove Minnesota Communications	\$7,934,000
ND	Dakota Central Telecommunications Cooperative	\$2,396,000
ND, SD	Consolidated Telecom	\$15,505,000
OK	Cross Cable Television, Inc.	\$10,309,000
OK	Wichita Online, Inc.	\$3,984,000
OR	Oregon Telephone Corporation	\$15,493,000
SD	Venture Communications Cooperative	\$58,305,000
SD, MN	Interstate Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc.	\$31,996,000
TN, KY	Highland Telephone Cooperative, Inc.	\$48,611,000
TX	Mid-Plains Telephone Cooperative	\$20,221,000
UT, WY	All West Communications, Inc.	\$45,131,000

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has invested more than \$110 billion since 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than 2 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA Rural Development's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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