

**SOUTHEAST ALASKA COMMUNITY OF KASAAN JOINS THE BROADBAND
DIGITAL AGE WITH A COMMUNITY CONNECT GRANT FROM USDA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**



Winter, 2007 photo of the mountaintop antenna site above the village on Kasaan Mountain. (Photo courtesy of Alaska Power and Telephone Company-used with permission)

THE NEED: The Alaska Native community of Kasaan, on Prince of Wales Island at the tip of Southeast Alaska did not have high speed Internet access, due to harsh surrounding terrain and other factors. Lack of high speed Internet access threatened to severely limit educational and other opportunities for the residents of the town.

HOW RURAL DEVELOPMENT HELPED: USDA Rural Development provided a \$1 million “Community Connect” grant which was used by Alaska Power and Telephone Company (AP&T) to work cooperatively with the Organized Village of Kasaan. Construction began in early 2007 and was completed later in the year. AP&T built a mountain top antenna site on Kasaan Mountain, established a community technology center, and provided over a dozen computers for use by local residents. The new technology opens the community to telemedicine service, distance learning and connects the community to other tribal organizations. “Coming together with the Village of Kasaan on this project was a natural extension of who we are as an employee-owned Alaskan company, as well as a keystone in AP&T’s broader plans for Southeastern Alaska,” said Michael Garrett, executive vice president of AP&T. “The USDA Rural Development ‘Community Connect’ program has enabled high speed broadband to be provided not only to Kasaan, but other communities in Alaska,” said Acting USDA Rural

Development State Director Chad Padgett. “The Alaska Congressional Delegation has been a strong supporter of broadband, and through those efforts we are working with the State and with industry partners to ensure that remote Alaska communities like Kasaan are at the forefront of the digital age, with the opportunity to develop new business and educational opportunities,” said Padgett. Padgett noted that the Community Connect grant requires that public safety organizations in the community receive broadband service and that the technology center be open to anyone who wants to use it.

THE RESULT:

Thanks to a partnership with USDA Rural Development, Alaska Power and Telephone Company and the Organized Village of Kasaan, the community now enjoys access to state-of-the-art broadband communication technologies with improved public safety, increased educational opportunities and access to commercial services. Other Alaska towns that have received Community Connect grants in recent years are Angoon, Anvik, Hughes, Kake, Nuiqsut, Ruby and Tatitlek.