



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA AWARDS \$28 MILLION FOR DISTANCE LEARNING AND TELEMEDICINE GRANTS

WASHINGTON, September 18, 2008 – Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas C. Dorr today announced the selection of 105 recipients in 41 states for Distance Learning and Telemedicine grants totaling \$28.2 million.

“These funds will increase the range of educational opportunities available to students in rural communities and improve access to health care for countless numbers of rural Americans,” said Dorr. “The projects will also open the door to the expansion of technology, increasing rural economic opportunities, promoting strong and vibrant communities.”

Of the grants announced today, 47 will provide access to medical services; 58 will be used to improve educational opportunities. In California, for example, Central Valley Health Network has been selected to receive \$74,500 to expand teleconferencing linkages between hub and end-user sites in rural areas. These interactive connections will allow healthcare workers to conduct live training sessions to increase the public’s awareness of medical issues and to establish linkages to community resources. The College of Siskiyou, in Weed, Calif., has been selected to receive \$289,430 for teleconferencing projects at the college and eight Siskiyou County high schools, as well as for rural health care providers in the area.

In Maine, the Spring Harbor Hospital in Westbrook was selected to receive \$51,850 to establish a telepsychiatry project to expand the availability of mental health care services in rural areas.

Funding of each recipient is contingent upon their meeting the conditions of the grant agreement. A complete list of the selected recipients is posted on the USDA Rural Development web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/newsroom/2008/09-18-2008-DLTrl.pdf>.

Committed to the future of rural communities.

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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 \$90 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 1.7 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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