

NYS Broadband Flash Bulletin

Issue 5, March 2011

USDA Administrator Announces Open Application Period for Community Connect Broadband Funding

On March 4, USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Administrator Jonathan Adelstein announced that the USDA is accepting applications for grants to provide broadband access in rural communities currently without broadband service. Joining him to make the announcement was Aneesh Chopra, Chief Technology Officer, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).

"As President Obama has said, 'Students should graduate from high school prepared for college and a career – no matter who you are or where you come from' – and this program connects school children to educational opportunities via the Internet in some of America's most remote locations," Adelstein said. "It also enhances commerce, public safety, and health care in rural areas that have been overlooked by modern communications technology. Broadband is an important part of the Obama Administration's effort to help rural America 'win the future.'"

"The industries and jobs of the future will be increasingly reliant upon our ability to move people, goods and information," said Chopra. "So if we want new jobs and businesses here in America, especially in our most rural communities, we've got to have a robust digital infrastructure as supported by investments through programs like Community Connect."

Funding is provided through the Community Connect Grant program. Grants are available to communities in the most rural, economically challenged areas where loans would not be sustainable. Funds may be used to construct, acquire or lease facilities to deploy broadband to residents, busi-



nesses and essential community facilities such as police and fire stations, libraries, schools, and health care clinics.

Eligible entities are incorporated organizations, Tribes and tribal organizations, state and local government bodies, for-profit or non-profit cooperatives, private corporations and limited liability corporations. Individuals are not eligible to apply. Grants range from \$50,000 to \$1.5 million. While grants cannot be renewed, applications to extend existing projects are welcome. Each project requires matching contributions, must serve a rural area where broadband service does not exist, must provide services to critical communities free of charge for two years, and must offer basic service to all premises within the proposed service area.

In Huerfano, New Mexico, for example, a Community Connect grant has measurably changed lives of the 400 residents in the north-east part of the Navajo Nation. Huerfano residents and community facilities, such as the community center, senior center, and schools, now have access to affordable phone and Internet service. Broadband has allowed residents to

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Quick Quote:

"In our 21st century digital economy, broadband – high-speed Internet – is the great equalizer – giving every American with an Internet connection access to a world of new opportunities previously beyond their reach."

—Chairman Julius Genachowski
Federal Communication Commission

RESOURCES:

U.S. Economic Recovery
www.recovery.gov

www.BroadbandUSA.gov

NYSBroadband.ny.gov

NYS Broadband Development and Deployment Council
www.cio.ny.gov/OFT/UniversalBroadband/overview.htm

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
www.fcc.gov
Broadband.gov

National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA)
www.ntia.doc.gov

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
www.usda.gov

FCC Acts to Strengthen and Expand Broadband and Other Communications Services in Native Nations

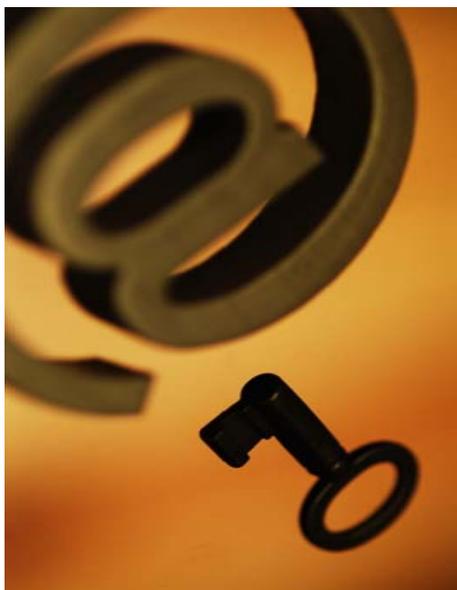
On March 3, the FCC acted on several regulatory items to strengthen and expand communications services to Native Nations and their communities. The FCC held a Native Nations Day as part of its open meeting with a renewed focus on initiatives that will help expand access to vital communications, including broadband, wireless and radio services in these communities across the United States. The meeting included public presentations from several Native Nation leaders, and afternoon nation-to-nation consultation sessions.

FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski said, "Technology touches every fabric of our society and all Americans should have access to these essential services. Our actions will further empower Native Nations to access and use the latest technologies to grow their businesses, increase their access to quality health care and education, reach 9-1-1 during emergencies, and receive public alerts and warnings."

"We recognize that action is needed to strengthen and expand broadband and communications services in Native communities," said Geoffrey Blackwell, Chief of the FCC's Office of Native Affairs and Policy. "The Commission's actions will help cultivate partnerships among Native Nations, federal agencies, and broadband and communications providers to deploy these vital services in Native communities. This is a top priority for the Commission."

The items adopted by the Commission today include:

- A Notice of Inquiry (NOI) on improving communications services for Native Nations that seeks comment on a number of issues, including greater broadband deployment, the need for a uniform definition of Tribal lands to be used agency-wide in rulemakings, and the importance of strengthening the FCC's nation-to-nation consultation process with Native Nations.
- A Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on ways to expand the efficient use of spectrum over Tribal lands so as to improve access to mobile wireless communications, which will provide consumers with more choices on how they communicate, share information and get their news.
- A Second Report and Order, First Order on Reconsideration, and a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) that will help expand opportunities for Tribal entities to provide broadcast radio services to Native communities.



USDA Announces Funding Available for Rural Broadband Development

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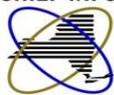
communicate with family members and access educational and health care information, which is critical to sustaining the Tribe's way of life. To learn more about this program, visit: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/STELPRD4007349.html>

Information on available funding and application requirements are published on page 12017 of the March 4, 2011 Federal Register. More information on Community Connect Grants, including the application guide, can be viewed and downloaded from the USDA Rural Development website.

USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, administers and manages

more than 40 housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs through a national network of employees located in the nation's capital and state and local offices. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of more than \$146 billion in loans and loan guarantees.

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