

# NYS Broadband Flash Bulletin

## Issue 2, January 2011

### FCC Survey finds faster broadband needed in schools and libraries

On January 6, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a report on the state of broadband connectivity at schools and libraries receiving funds from the federal E-rate program, which provides support to help connect schools and libraries to the Internet.

The report is based on data from a survey conducted in 2010 that examined the success and challenges related to broadband use faced by schools and libraries. This survey will help the FCC make data-driven policy decisions for the E-rate program by providing information on the educational and technological needs of schools and libraries.

The survey was commissioned by the FCC and conducted by Harris Interactive, Inc., an independent national marketing research firm. Specifically, the survey found:

**Almost All Have At Least Some Broadband:** 95% of all E-rate survey respondents have some form of terrestrial broadband connection to at least one facility, while 2% use satellite and 3% use dial-up.

**Faster Broadband Speeds Needed:** However, nearly 80% of all survey respondents say their broadband connections do not fully meet their current needs.

- Slow connection speed is the primary reason current Internet connectivity does not meet the needs for 55% of these respondents.

**Cost is a Big Factor:** 39% of E-



rate survey respondents cite cost of service as a barrier in meeting their Internet needs, and 27% cite cost of installation as a barrier.

**E-Book Use to Greatly Increase:** 56% of all E-rate survey respondents expect to implement or expand the use of digital textbooks in the next two to three years, and 45% expect to implement or expand the use of handheld devices for educational purposes.

**Most Have Speeds Greater Than 3 Mbps:** 10% of E-rate survey respondents have broadband speeds of 100 Mbps or greater and most (55%) have broadband speeds greater than 3 Mbps.

- More than half of school districts (60%) subscribe to a fiber optic connection.

- 66% of respondents provide some wireless connectivity for staff, students or library patrons.

**E-Mail Essential for Schools:** For schools, e-mail is the most

used application (almost all schools, 98%, regularly use or access e-mail), and the most essential (69% consider it the most essential).

**Libraries Rely on Online Reference Materials:** For libraries, online reference materials are both the most used application (86% of staff and patrons regularly use or access online reference materials) and the most essential (62% consider it the most essential).

The E-rate program, which provides more than \$2.25 billion annually to support telephone and Internet connections at schools and libraries across the country, was recently upgraded to allow schools and libraries to get higher-speed broadband at lower cost ([FCC 10-175](#)).



#### Fast Fact:

**62% of all Americans said the internet has had a major impact on the ability of groups to draw attention to an issue.**

—“The Social Side of the Internet”  
 Pew Internet & American Life Project  
 January 18, 2011

#### RESOURCES:

**U.S. Economic Recovery**  
[www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov)

[www.BroadbandUSA.gov](http://www.BroadbandUSA.gov)

[NYSBroadband.ny.gov](http://NYSBroadband.ny.gov)

**NYS Broadband Development and Deployment Council**  
[www.cio.ny.gov/OFT/UniversalBroadband/overview.htm](http://www.cio.ny.gov/OFT/UniversalBroadband/overview.htm)

**Federal Communications Commission (FCC)**  
[www.fcc.gov/Broadband.gov](http://www.fcc.gov/Broadband.gov)

**National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA)**  
[www.ntia.doc.gov](http://www.ntia.doc.gov)

**U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**  
[www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

## Pew Report: The Social Side of the Internet

The internet is now deeply embedded in group and organizational life in America. A new national survey by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project has found that 75% of all American adults are active in some kind of voluntary group or organization and internet users are more likely than others to be active: 80% of internet users participate in groups, compared with 56% of non-internet users. And social media users are even more likely to be active: 82% of social network users and 85% of Twitter users are group participants.

In this survey, Pew Internet asked about 27 different kinds of groups and found great diversity in group membership and participation using traditional and new technologies. It becomes clear as people are asked about their activities that their use of the internet is having a wide-ranging impact on their engagement with civic, social, and religious groups. At a personal level, those who are active in groups say the internet has had varying influence over their connection to groups.

Groups and their members are using all kinds of digital tools to bind themselves together and some of the most innovative involve social networking sites like Facebook (used by 62% of the internet users in our survey), Twitter (used by 12% of internet users), blogs, and texting (used by 74% of the cell phone owners in our survey).

To read the report, visit:

[http://www.pewinternet.org/~/\\_/media//Files/Reports/2011/PIP\\_Social\\_Side\\_of\\_the\\_Internet.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/~/_/media//Files/Reports/2011/PIP_Social_Side_of_the_Internet.pdf)

## RUS Releases "Advancing Broadband" Report

This fall USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) successfully completed its final round of grant awards under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act). "In the last year and a half, we've done more to bridge the digital divide for rural Americans than many ever thought possible. The Recovery Act has unleashed an historic level of investment in rural high speed telecommunications infrastructure that will create new jobs, new services and new opportunities across the countryside," said Jonathan Adelstein, USDA Rural Development Rural Utilities Service Administrator.

The Recovery Act Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) consisted of two rounds of funding. In those two rounds the RUS broadband team reviewed more than 3,000 applications and selected 320 projects for awards across 46 states and one territory.

Adelstein announced that the USDA published an 84-page report, entitled "Advancing Broadband," that details all the BIP awarded projects. "The selection process was rigorous and the competition was intense. The Advancing Broadband report explains the exciting new services which will soon be made available in hundreds of rural communities," he said.

By leveraging the original \$2.5 billion authorized by Congress to fund loans as well as grants, the USDA was able to invest almost \$3.53 billion in rural broadband infrastructure. In addition, \$285 million of non-federal funds were committed to be invested in BIP projects. This funding will enable around 7 million rural Americans to connect to one of 285 last-mile, 12 middle-mile, or four satellite projects funded by the BIP program. On top of that, over 360,000 businesses and 30,000 community service organizations such as hospi-

tals, schools and public safety agencies will be connected to a high-speed digital future.

"Advancing Broadband' provides a foundation for strong rural communities. Products, services and ideas originated in rural communities can find a global market. Life-long learning, government services and quality medical advice can be brought right into your community and home. Jobs and economic opportunity will be created as successful applicants build



out BIP funded systems and as rural farms, businesses and communities find new ways to build on this exciting new infrastructure. Approximately 25,000 jobs will be created immediately and many thousands more will be created in the future based on these new networks," Adelstien said

In addition to the publication, he also announced that RUS will soon be opening a "regular" broadband loan and grant programs to new applications. "We are encouraging those who did not get funded in the highly competitive BIP program to consider applying to our broadband loan and community connect programs," Adelstein said.

To view the report, please visit: [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/supportdocuments/RBB\\_report\\_whole-v4ForWeb.pdf](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/supportdocuments/RBB_report_whole-v4ForWeb.pdf)