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USDA Announces \$5.2 million in funding to expand Broadband Access in Reedsburg, WI *Wisconsin awarded more than \$25.2 million through the Recovery Act for broadband infrastructure projects*

REEDSBURG, Wis., July 7, 2010 –USDA Rural Utilities Service Administrator Jonathan Adelstein and USDA Rural Development State Director Stan Gruszynski Wednesday announced the awarding of more than \$5.2 million to the Reedsburg Utilities Commission for broadband infrastructure improvements and service expansion.

"The City of Reedsburg has stepped up to ensure that residents in the area have broadband service that is second to none and this investment will lay the foundation for economic development in the area for years to come," said Adelstein.

Reedsburg Utility Commission, Inc received a \$5,239,168 grant and \$2,303,357 in private investment for the Reedsburg Utility Commission Fiber Network Expansion project. The funding will extend an existing municipal fiber-to-the-premise network operated by City of Reedsburg to the surrounding rural area to provide affordable advanced broadband service to residents and businesses that are currently confined to traditional dial-up, wireless, and satellite services. This rural area of southwestern portion of Wisconsin is deficient in broadband services due to the hilly terrain and numerous valleys which severely limit wireless and satellite service coverage.

In addition, Marquette-Adams Telephone Cooperative, Inc. received a \$6,202,326 loan and \$13,805,175 grant combination. This project will extend fiber optic service from the existing Telephone Cooperative service area where all customers can currently receive broadband voice, video and data services to unserved and under-served rural areas bordering the Telephone Cooperative's current territory.

"Building a broadband infrastructure is critical to creating jobs and economic opportunity in rural areas and with investments in broadband we are fostering innovation and bringing our rural communities into the digital age," said Gruszynski. "At USDA Rural Development, we are focused every day to helping create thriving rural communities where people want to live and raise families. These funds will put people to work constructing new facilities, erecting towers to transmit signals and high speed broadband services installed in homes, businesses and community education, safety and public health centers."

Last Friday, President Obama, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack and Commerce Secretary Locke announced the investment in sixty-six new Recovery Act broadband projects nationwide including 37 in rural America that, according to the grantees, will not only directly create over 5,000 jobs up front, but also help spur economic development in some of the nation's hardest-hit communities, creating jobs for years to come. In total, tens of millions of Americans and

over 685,000 businesses, 900 healthcare facilities and 2,400 schools in all fifty states stand to benefit from the awards. The \$780 million in grants and loans through the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture have been matched by over \$200 million in outside investment, for a total public-private investment of nearly \$1 billion in bringing broadband service to these communities, which currently have little or no access, to help them better compete and do business in the global marketplace.

Friday's announcement began the U.S. Department of Agriculture's second round of broadband funding announcements through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act). In all, \$390.9 million will be invested in 37 projects through funding made available by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. An additional \$21.9 million in private investment will be provided, bringing the total funds invested to \$412.7 million. To date, \$1.458 billion has been awarded to construct 105 broadband projects in 37 states and one territory.

According to [analysis released by the National Economic Council](#) last year, overall Recovery Act investments in broadband are expected to create tens of thousands of jobs in the near term and expand economic development and job opportunities in communities that would otherwise be left behind in the new knowledge-based economy. Recovery Act broadband projects help bring down the cost of private investment, attract Internet service providers to new areas, improve digital literacy among students and workers, and help create new opportunities in employment, education, and entrepreneurship by wiring homes and businesses. With new or increased broadband access, communities can compete on a level playing field to attract new businesses, schools can create distance learning opportunities, medical professionals can provide cost-efficient remote diagnoses and care, and business owners can expand the market for their products beyond their neighborhoods to better compete in the global economy.

President Obama signed The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 into law on Feb. 17, 2009. It is designed to jumpstart the nation's economy, create or save millions of jobs, and put a down payment on addressing long-neglected challenges so our country can thrive in the 21st century. The Act includes measures to modernize our nation's infrastructure, enhance energy independence, expand educational opportunities, preserve and improve affordable health care, provide tax relief, and protect those in greatest need.

More information about USDA's Recovery Act efforts is available at www.usda.gov/recovery . More information about the Federal government's efforts on the Recovery Act is available at <http://www.recovery.gov/> .

Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. This past year, USDA Rural Development returned over \$740 million to rural Wisconsin communities. The funding supports a wide variety of loan, guaranteed loan and grant programs to rural residents in the areas of housing, community facilities, business development, infrastructure, and other development needs.

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