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SECRETARY LOCKE ANNOUNCES RECOVERY ACT INVESTMENTS TO EXPAND BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS AND SPUR ECONOMIC GROWTH

WASHINGTON – U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke today announced 10 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act investments to help bridge the technological divide, boost economic growth, create jobs, and improve education and healthcare across the country. The investments, totaling more than \$63 million in grants, will increase broadband access and adoption in more than a dozen states. The grants will fund projects that lay the groundwork to bring enhanced high-speed Internet access to thousands of households and businesses and link hundreds of schools, hospitals, libraries, and public safety offices to the information superhighway.

“In a globalized 21st century economy, when you don’t have regular access to high-speed Internet, you don’t have access to all the educational, business and employment opportunities it provides,” Locke said. “These critical Recovery Act investments will create jobs and lay the groundwork for long-term sustainable economic growth in communities across America.”

The Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s (NTIA) Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), funded by the Recovery Act, provides grants to support the deployment of broadband infrastructure, enhance and expand public computer centers, and encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service.

“The level of interest in this program has been extraordinary, and is yet another indicator of the critical role broadband plays in achieving durable, sustainable economic growth,” Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator Lawrence E. Strickling said. “Like the grants announced today, the strongest proposals are the ones that have taken a truly comprehensive view of the communities to be served and have engaged as many key members of the communities as possible in developing the projects.”

The following grants were announced today:

Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah - Navajo Tribal Utility Authority: \$32.2 million broadband infrastructure grant with an additional \$13.8 million applicant-provided match to bring high-

speed affordable broadband services to the Navajo Nation by deploying 550 miles of new aerial fiber-optic cable and 59 new or modified microwave towers covering 15,000 square miles in three states. The proposed service area has rugged terrain and significant poverty, and more than 60 percent of residents lack basic telephone service. The project expects to directly connect 49 Chapter Houses, which serve as community centers for the Navajo population, at speeds from 10 Mbps to 10 Gbps. Last-mile wireless services will be offered at speeds between 1 and 3 Mbps through the project's wireless partner, Commnet Wireless.

Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Texas - Mission Economic Development Agency: \$3.7 million public computer center grant with an additional \$2.5 million applicant-provided match to create 12 new public computer centers and expand five existing ones in Phoenix, Ariz.; Canoga Park, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, Calif.; Del Norte, Colo.; Blackfoot, Idaho; Wheaton, Md.; Minneapolis, Minn.; Kansas City, Mo.; Anthony, NM; Philadelphia, Pa.; and San Antonio and Laredo, Texas. Each center expects to operate on the project's centrally managed network and provide computer training and adult education to a low broadband adoption, high unemployment target population through a standardized English-Spanish training curriculum.

Idaho - First Step Internet: \$2.4 million broadband infrastructure grant with an additional \$600,000 applicant-provided match to build a regional network of 10 microwave towers to extend high-capacity Internet service in the rural counties of Latah, Idaho, Clearwater, Lewis, and Nez Perce in north-central Idaho. The project intends to directly connect 42 anchor institutions, including healthcare facilities, emergency response agencies, libraries, and government offices, as well as institutions serving the Nez Perce Tribe.

Illinois - City of Chicago: \$7 million sustainable broadband adoption grant with an additional \$2.3 million applicant-provided match to spur economic development in five disadvantaged neighborhoods in Chicago with a comprehensive broadband awareness and adoption program that will include providing computers and training opportunities to more than 11,000 residents and 500 small businesses and not-for-profits. The project intends to create public computer centers at six community centers for working families and expand workstation capacity at four Business Resource Centers, as well as provide 1,500 residents and small businesses that complete a multi-session training course with laptops and netbooks.

Minnesota - C.K. Blandin Foundation: \$4.9 million sustainable broadband adoption grant with an additional \$1.5 million applicant-provided match to launch the Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities initiative, a multi-sector, comprehensive approach to sustainable broadband adoption targeting residents, small businesses, local governments, and critical services providers in each of Minnesota's 80 rural counties. The project anticipates training as many as 2,500 individuals in computer literacy, online education, and workforce development, and plans to distribute 1,000 affordable refurbished computers. Funding will also support the development of institutional broadband applications for schools and healthcare facilities to help increase broadband adoption.

North Carolina - Fayetteville State University: \$1 million public computer center grant with an additional \$263,000 applicant-provided match to provide 30 new computer workstations,

wireless Internet access, and training courses at a new public computer center for the Fayetteville, North Carolina, community, including residents of local public housing. The project will include courses on Internet basics, personal finance and health, and basic job skills. The first 50 users to complete all of these courses will receive a laptop computer for home use. This project will be led by Fayetteville State University, a Historically Black University, in partnership with the Fayetteville Metropolitan Housing Authority and other organizations that will provide training targeted to the needs of low-income persons.

Ohio and Pennsylvania - Zito Media Communications: \$6.1 million broadband infrastructure grant with an additional \$1.5 million applicant-provided match to create a 382-mile fiber ring with 10 gigabits of capacity through the counties of Geauga, Ashtabula, and Trumbull in Northeastern Ohio, and the counties of Erie, Crawford, and Mercer in Northwestern Pennsylvania. The project plans to deploy 342 miles of new fiber and 40 miles of leased fiber to directly connect an estimated 60 community anchor institutions at speeds from 10 Mbps to 1 Gbps, including hospitals, schools, public safety agencies, colleges, and libraries.

Vermont - Vermont Council on Rural Development: \$2.5 million sustainable broadband adoption grant with an additional \$1.2 million applicant-provided match to increase broadband Internet access and adoption in 24 small, mostly rural communities through a comprehensive effort combining broadband training, access, awareness, and planning. The Vermont Council on Rural Development and its project partners plan to train more than 1,800 individuals and distribute an estimated 1,200 computers to 4th and 5th grade students, as well as work with teachers to integrate broadband usage into lesson plans.

Virginia - Nelson County of Virginia: \$1.8 million broadband infrastructure grant with an additional \$457,000 applicant-provided match to enhance and expand broadband Internet services in areas of rural Nelson County, Virginia by deploying 31 miles of new fiber and four new wireless tower sites, and directly connecting 13 community anchor institutions. The anchor institutions receiving direct connections to the new network are expected to include seven county government facilities, four K-12 schools, a library, and the Blue Ridge Medical Center.

Virginia - Page County Broadband Authority: \$1.6 million broadband infrastructure grant with an additional \$412,000 applicant-provided match to deploy a 39-mile fiber network that will serve the four principal towns in Page County, Virginia, a rural and underserved area in the Shenandoah region of Western Virginia. The network expects to directly connect 29 anchor institutions including, 11 K-12 schools, three libraries, six healthcare facilities, Lord Fairfax Community College, and eight public safety institutions.

NTIA received more than 1,800 applications proposing projects totaling nearly \$19 billion during the first BTOP funding round and is currently awarding grants on a rolling basis. NTIA just received a second round of applications in the BTOP Sustainable Broadband Adoption and Public Computer Center grant categories, and is currently accepting applications in the BTOP Comprehensive Community Infrastructure grant category through March 26, 2010.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided a total of \$7.2 billion to NTIA and the Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to fund projects that will expand

access to and adoption of broadband services. NTIA will utilize \$4.7 billion of that funding for grants to deploy broadband infrastructure in the United States, expand public computer center capacity, and encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service. NTIA will announce all grant awards by September 30, 2010.

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Fact sheets with further information about all BTOP grants are available on the NTIA Web site here: <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants/projects.html>.