



PRESS RELEASE

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USDA Rural Development Announces \$15.6 Million In Broadband Community Connect Grants

WASHINGTON, *July 29, 2008* – Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas C. Dorr today announced the selection of 25 communities in 16 states, including Washington State, to receive \$15.6 million in broadband community connect grants.

"These funds will provide a critical link between essential community facilities in areas where no broadband service currently exists," said Dorr. "The grants will be used to improve public safety and enable residents to pursue on-line educational opportunities."

The Community Connect program provides grants to establish broadband service in rural communities. The grants may be used to deploy broadband transmission service to residents, businesses and critical community facilities such as police and first responders. They also may be used to construct and operate community centers that provide free broadband access to community residents.

In Washington State, the Spokane-based internet provider, Wired or Wireless, Inc., will receive a \$671,008 Community Connect Grant to establish broadband service in the community of Malden, Whitman County. The Malden city hall, police station, fire station, and a new community center, will receive broadband free for two years.

"We at USDA Rural Development are pleased to support this project to bring broadband internet service to the community of Malden, improving the quality of life and expanding economic opportunities for local residents." Said Jon DeVaney, Washington State Director.

Funding of individual award recipients is contingent upon their meeting the conditions of the award agreement.

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's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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Committed to the future of rural communities.

"USDA is an equal opportunity provider, empower and lender."

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