



Regulatory Commission of Alaska

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORIZES SECOND \$7.5 MILLION
GRANT FOR RURAL INTERNET ACCESS IN ALASKA**

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 3rd

As part of continuing state and federal efforts to extend affordable Internet service to rural areas within Alaska, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Rural Development has conditionally awarded a \$7.5 million grant to the State of Alaska's Broadband Internet Access Grant Program. The grant award is the second portion of a \$15 million allocation obtained through the efforts of Senator Ted Stevens. Stevens is an ardent proponent for the development of modern communications infrastructure throughout Alaska.

"These funds are designed to extend affordable broadband Internet service to rural Alaska communities with high levels of unemployment and underemployment, providing new opportunities for economic development," said Dean Stewart, Director of Community and Business Programs for USDA-Rural Development. The funding was made available through USDA-Rural Development's Community Facilities program.

The grant goes to the Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and will be jointly administered by the DCED and the Regulatory Commission of Alaska. "These funds will be used to provide rural Alaskans with Internet access comparable to that which exists in Alaska's larger communities, furthering the goal of bridging the digital divide," said Mark Johnson, Chair of the Regulatory Commission of Alaska.

Grant applications and bid proposals must be submitted to the Regulatory Commission of Alaska by November 3, 2003. For more information about the program, and for details on eligibility requirements, visit the web page: www.state.ak.us/rca/broadband.html.

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