

STATE OF ALASKA
**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

REGULATORY COMMISSION OF ALASKA

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**REGULATORY COMMISSION OF ALASKA AWARDS FEDERAL GRANTS FOR INTERNET
ACCESS IN RURAL ALASKA**

(Anchorage) - The Regulatory Commission of Alaska is in the process of awarding grant funds for the second round of the Rural Alaska Broadband Internet Access Grant Program ("Grant Program") to assist in the establishment of broadband Internet service in rural Alaska.

Under a continuing state and federal effort to make Internet service more affordable to communities in rural Alaska, \$15 million has been allocated to assist service providers in the deployment of broadband. The program was established through the efforts of Senator Ted Stevens, who continues to advocate for the development of modern communications infrastructure throughout the state.

The grants are being jointly administered by the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development and the Regulatory Commission of Alaska. To date, the state has committed more than \$8 million dollars to grant projects that will implement broadband Internet service into unserved locations within Alaska. Approximately \$7 million dollars was awarded in the first round of the Grant Program, while the state recently awarded more than \$1 million dollars in grant requests for the second round of the Grant Program. These grant awards were made possible through a program funded by USDA Rural Development.

The grant funding is part of continuing state and federal efforts to spur economic development and technological improvements in rural Alaska. "Communications, along with power and access, comprise the basic elements needed for economic and community development. In today's connected world, access to the Internet represents a fundamental tool of great value," said Bill Noll, Commissioner of the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. "We are very pleased to be working with the Regulatory Commission of Alaska to provide broadband to Alaskans, and we thank the USDA and Sen. Ted Stevens for making this program possible."

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DCED Awards Federal Grants for Internet Access in Rural Alaska

Page 2

For remote areas of Alaska, this program has the potential of significant impacts. "Senator Ted Stevens is the champion for establishing national policy and securing funding for rural broadband access," said Chad Padgett, Acting Alaska State Director for USDA Rural Development. "As more rural residents are provided access to telecommunication systems, greater opportunities and improvements will evolve in e-commerce, education, public safety and health care. It is my hope that broadband access will result in rural residents and entire communities in Alaska planning a new course for their future and for their position in the global economy," said Padgett.

Potential grant recipients in the second round of more than \$1 million are: AP&T Wireless, Inc.; AT&T Alascom; and Yukon Telephone Company. Communities where service may be implemented in the second round are: Edna Bay, Kasaan, Manley Hot Springs, Naukati Bay, Port Alexander, Port Protection, and Tenakee Springs.

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For more information about the program, visit the web page: www.state.ak.us/rca/broadband