



STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE
COMMUNITY AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Susan K. Bell, Commissioner
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Regulatory Commission of Alaska

PRESS RELEASE

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AWARDS FEDERAL GRANTS FOR INTERNET ACCESS IN RURAL ALASKA**

(Anchorage) - The State of Alaska's Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) recently awarded federal funds under the Rural Alaska Broadband Internet Access Grant Program ("Grant Program"), to develop broadband capacity in three rural communities. The Grant Program, funded by U.S. Department of Agriculture - Rural Development (USDA) and jointly administered by DCCED and the Regulatory Commission of Alaska, assists those deploying broadband Internet service in rural Alaska.

Under this state and federal effort to make Internet service more affordable to communities in rural Alaska, \$6.2 million has been awarded to date in 2011 to assist service providers in the deployment of broadband. Earlier this year, DCCED established a statewide broadband task force to assist with the development of a long-range broadband plan for Alaska.

Current grant recipients are GCI and Yukon Telephone Company (Yukon) for work in Ruby, Tanana and Unalakleet. GCI will build high capacity terrestrial microwave network and wireless transport facilities that will provide Internet access to the village of Unalakleet. Yukon will build terrestrial microwave network and additional wireline transport facilities that will provide Internet access to the villages of Ruby and Tanana.

"Access to broadband services will help increase economic opportunity and improve the access to education and health services in rural Alaska," said DCCED Commissioner Susan Bell. "This grant program is just one of several initiatives in which the department is involved to make broadband accessible to residents, and enhance the operations of government in its communication efforts with community, tribal, and non-profit entities."

When the grant funds were awarded, Jim Nordlund, State Director for USDA-RD said: "The Rural Alaska Broadband Internet Access Grant Program is one of the very important continuing efforts advanced by USDA-RD to bring social and economic development to small communities in remote parts of Alaska. The USDA-RD is very happy to be an active participant with the state in doing what it can to provide residents with significantly enhanced access to the vast amount of information and service content now found on the Internet."

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For more information about the program, visit the web page:
<http://rca.alaska.gov/RCAWeb/Programs/BroadbandInternetGrant.aspx>

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