

Funding Will Expand Access to 45,000 New Mexicans, 600+ Businesses

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senators Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall and U.S. Representatives Harry Teague and Ben Ray Luján today announced that more than \$18.65 million has been awarded to three New Mexico Internet providers to expand access to high-speed broadband services to underserved communities across the state.

The awards, provided by the Department of Agriculture through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, will benefit approximately 45,000 people, more than 600 businesses, and 98 community institutions. The projects will also create hundreds of new jobs and provide a foundation for economic growth and job creation for decades to come.

"Broadband is increasingly essential for businesses, homes and schools. This investment in rural communities throughout our state will provide broadband access to thousands of New Mexico residents, while bolstering businesses and expanding learning opportunities," Bingaman said.

"By connecting our rural communities through reliable, fast broadband service, we are laying a strong foundation for economic growth, job creation, and improved quality of life for all New Mexicans," Udall said. "I am pleased that the Recovery Act continues to provide for important investments in New Mexico's future."

"As we continue to invest in New Mexico, it is critical to spur jobs and opportunities not just in the big cities, but in rural communities too," Teague said. "Expanding broadband to rural communities brings essential services to communities where reliable Internet access is still a luxury and creates a platform for economic growth and future investment. This Recovery Act funding will create jobs now - through the construction process - and well in to the future by providing local businesses the tools and resources to compete on larger scales and expand their operations."

"From small business owners to local students, access to broadband improves prospects for New Mexicans and means real jobs in our rural communities. These awards will fund infrastructure that will increase the availability and speed of broadband in rural areas. Funding will support high-tech upgrades to New Mexico's broadband network and improve Internet service for our homes, businesses, and communities. I am proud to see these funds serving New Mexicans," Luján said.

- La Jicarita Rural Telephone Cooperative NM \$11,856,832. This award will allow La Jicarita Rural Telephone Cooperative to offer full fiber capabilities to rural establishments with broadband service speeds of up to 18 Mbps. This last-mile project, along with a middle-mile component, will allow the company to provide affordable higher speed last-mile services to a majority of its subscriber base that would otherwise go underserved. Approximately 3,000 people stand to benefit, as do roughly 40 businesses and 8 community institutions.

- US Cable of Northern New Mexico, Inc. NM \$4,521,289. This award, matched by \$1.9 million in private contributions, will allow US Cable of Northern New Mexico, Inc., to implement the Española Valley Broadband Initiative and Future Opportunities project to offer broadband service speeds exceeding 20 Mbps. The project design includes a fiber rich two-way hybrid fiber coaxial upgrade using DOCSIS 3.0 technology to serve customers in Española, Dixon and Peñasco. Approximately 32,000 people stand to benefit, as do roughly 550 businesses and 88 community institutions. The company estimates the project will create 235 jobs.

- Windstream Corporation NM \$2,273,847. This award, matched by \$757,950 in private contributions, will allow Windstream to extend its broadband network to provide service to unserved homes and businesses in the areas of Chimayo, Dixon, Peñasco, Rio Chama, Ruidoso, South Rio Arriba, Tierra Amarilla, Truth or Consequences and Vallecitas. The project will use industry standard ADSL2+ (Asynchronous Digital Subscriber Line) protocols that will offer broadband service speeds of up to 12 Mbps. Approximately 10,000 people stand to benefit, as do roughly 50 businesses and 2 community institutions. The company estimates the project will create 29 jobs.

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