



NYS Broadband Flash Bulletin

Volume 4, Issue 2

New York State Broadband Project Sponsors Receive More than \$650,000 to Improve Telemedicine and Distance Learning Services

On June 6, The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded \$14 million in funding for broadband projects that will increase access to health care and enhance educational opportunities in rural communities across 29 states.

Jessica Zufolo, Deputy Administrator for the Rural Utilities Service highlighted three New York recipients of the Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grants during the Rural Broadband Roundtable held in Cooperstown, New York. The Roundtable, held the same day as the RUS announcement was made, was hosted by the USDA, the Office of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and the NYS Telecommunications Association. The event focused on the challenges around access and affordability of high-speed Internet services in rural New York. During the event, David Salway, New York State Broadband Program Director, discussed statewide efforts to expand rural broadband access. The NYS Office of Cyber Security also delivered a presentation on the Broadband Map.

Three New York broadband project recipients of the DLT Grant received a combined total of more than \$650,000 and include:

- **The Adirondack Medical Center — \$112,860**

Funds will be used to implement a telemedicine network connecting the main hospital at Saranac Lake with satellite clinics in the nearby rural areas – setting up new video end points to extend the hospital's medical services. The network will allow rural clinicians to visually consult with medical specialists at the hospital, to synchronize patient information between sites, and to realize cost-savings at every point in the process, especially travel costs for patients. The primary and secondary service areas span over 1,200 square miles in rural, upstate New York.

- **The Finger Lakes Migrant Health Care Project — \$215,650**

Funds will be used to expand an existing telehealth network to 10 new sites, providing the equipment to bring these clinics into the larger health care network as video end points so that telemedicine can be brought into these previously underserved communities. With a special emphasis on the farm worker community, the project will connect these rural clinics with four partnering hub sites providing video consultation with physicians in areas of eye care, dental care, behavioral health consultations, occupational health, and other essential health care services. The programs also offer linguistically appropriate distance-education programs, including healthcare career opportunities with clinical mentoring and Continuing Medical Education courses.

- **Herkimer-Fulton Hamilton Ostego Boces — \$338,716**

Funds will be used by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services to invest in distance learning and video teleconferencing equipment that will help to interconnect local high schools and other educational facilities in 12 school districts. Each site will both originate and receive instructed courses and related educational content across the network, with a new content server located at BOCES to capture and stream the media being produced. The network will help local school districts leverage the available teaching staff to reach a wider student population, which could help to offset the severe budget cuts.



Jon Cardinal, Legislative Assistant to Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) and Jessica Zufolo, Deputy Administrator, RUS, discuss rural broadband challenges during the roundtable discussion.

The DLT Grants are designed to provide access to education, training and health care resources for people in rural America. The DLT Program provides financial assistance to encourage and improve telemedicine services and distance learning services in rural areas through the use of telecommunications, computer networks and related advanced technologies to be used by students, teachers, medical professionals and rural residents.

The recipients include 19 distance learning projects, 32 telemedicine projects and one combined project. All will benefit rural counties. Nearly half of the total funding will go to counties where the minority population is greater than 30%. Another 18% of this funding will benefit areas where the Native American population exceeds 30%.

For a complete list of the DLT awards, please [click here](#).

To read the full press release from the USDA announcing the awards, visit <http://content.govdelivery.com/bulletins/gd/USDAO-438c61>.

Proposed Bill Establishes New Rural Broadband Grant Program

During the Rural Broadband Roundtable held yesterday in Cooperstown, New York, Jon Cardinal, Legislative Assistant to Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) shared details on the "Broadband Connections for Rural Opportunities Program Act of 2012 (B-CROP)" proposed by the Senator in April of this year.

The B-CROP Act would amend the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 and would authorize the awarding of grants covering up to 50% of eligible project development costs. The grants would be combined with the current loan funding available through the USDA RUS to provide resources to expand broadband access to unserved rural areas. By combining grants with loans, the Bill helps enhance the economic feasibility of projects serving high cost areas.

The B-CROP Act also requires the USDA to streamline grant and loan programs and the process involved when applying. To ensure funds awarded are being wisely invested in rural areas with the highest need, the legislation also calls for reports evaluating the effectiveness of broadband assistance programs.

The Bill also calls on the USDA to develop a new interactive rural broadband website that describe the funding and provides information on other rural broadband related information.

Study Cites Recommendations to Improve Broadband Needs Throughout America's Schools

According to a recently study, "[The Broadband Imperative](#)", released by the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA), American schools need broadband networks that deliver broadband performance of 100Mbps for every 1,000 students and staff members in time for the 2014-15 school year. With more and more schools using online textbooks and collaboration tools, Christine Fox, director of educational leadership and research at SETDA said, "broadband access must be "ubiquitous" and "robust" and schools should think of broadband as a necessary utility, not as an add-on."

The report, further suggests that schools should upgrade their networks to support speeds of 1Gbps per 1,000 users in five years. SETDA noted that users who stream high-definition video will require download speeds of 4Mbps (the FCC minimum download speed).



SETDA offers four recommendations in the report for policymakers and school leaders committed to charting the course for the future of education enabled by broadband. The recommendations are to:

1. Address K-12 broadband infrastructure needs
2. Provide universal broadband access for students and educators outside of the school
3. Build state leadership in the development and implementation of broadband
4. Advocate for federal funding

To view the entire report and recommendations, visit http://www.setda.org/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=353&name=DLFE-1517.pdf

Rural Broadband — Not Just a New York Problem

Building out rural broadband is a national problem and New York's neighboring State's are also working on solutions to expand broadband into unserved communities. On June 6, Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin announced that four new towers had been added to expand service to homes and businesses in parts of rural Vermont (Woodbury, Hardwick, Wolcott and parts of Elmore, Greensboro, Walden and Cabot). Governor Shumlin says the project is another step in his goal of getting broadband internet service to the 20,000 unserved Vermont residents by the end of 2013.