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# News Release

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## **USDA Invests \$152 Million to Improve Broadband Service in 14 States**

*Projects will Provide High-Speed Communications Technology to Support Economic and Educational Opportunities*

**WASHINGTON**, Oct. 7, 2019 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Donald “DJ” LaVoy today announced that [USDA is investing \\$152 million in 19 projects to provide or improve rural broadband service in 14 states.](#)

“Deploying high-speed broadband internet connectivity, or ‘e-Connectivity,’ in rural America expands access to essential health, educational, social and business opportunities,” LaVoy said. “President Trump and Agriculture Secretary Perdue are committed to fully utilizing all resources Congress provides for building and modernizing this critical infrastructure in rural America, because we believe that when rural America thrives, all of America thrives.”

USDA is making the investments through the [Community Connect Grant Program](#), the [Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program](#) and the [Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program](#). Investing in telecommunications infrastructure connects people to each other: businesses to customers, farmers to markets, and students to a world of knowledge. Below are examples of the projects that will receive USDA funding.

- Logan Telephone Cooperative Inc. will use a \$34.4 million Telecommunications Program loan to upgrade a Fiber-to-the-Home system in Butler, Logan and Muhlenberg counties in southwestern Kentucky. The system will enable families, educators and businesses to access higher-speed broadband internet. More than 5,300 residential and business customers will benefit.
- In Morton County, N.D., USDA is partnering with BEK Communications Cooperative by providing an \$844,000 Community Connect Program grant to help spark economic and educational opportunities, enhance health care and bolster public safety. BEK will deploy a 49-mile Fiber-to-the-Home network. This project will bring high-speed broadband to 125 underserved households.
- In southwest Virginia, iGo Technology Inc. will use a \$3 million Community Connect grant to bring enhanced broadband opportunities to 820 homes and businesses. Part of the

grant will be used to provide free broadband services at The Bee Community Center, in the town of Bee in Dickenson County, for two years.

The projects USDA is investing in today will help improve the quality of life in rural communities in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

In April 2017, President Donald J. Trump established the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity to identify legislative, regulatory and policy changes that could promote agriculture and prosperity in rural communities. In January 2018, Secretary Perdue presented the Task Force's findings to President Trump. These findings included 31 recommendations to align the federal government with state, local and tribal governments to take advantage of opportunities that exist in rural America. Increasing investments in rural infrastructure is a cornerstone recommendation of the task force.

To view the report in its entirety, please view the [Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity](#) (PDF, 5.4 MB). In addition, to view the categories of the recommendations, please view the [Rural Prosperity infographic](#) (PDF, 190 KB).

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community services such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov).

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