



## Telecom Company Helps Rural Businesses Compete in Global Marketplace

Many rural communities lack the necessary infrastructure to provide broadband services, creating myriad challenges for local residents, businesses, schools, and other essential community services. In contrast, residents of Molalla and Mulino, Oregon, are gaining access to affordable, high quality voice services and some of the fastest broadband services in the nation.

Molalla Communications Company is a nonprofit cooperative providing telecommunication services to these rural areas. The company's service area includes a large base of agricultural customers, an industry where advanced telecommunication services are becoming a more prevalent need to help businesses compete in today's widely connected world.



*Lance Eves, Chief Operating Officer of Molalla Communications Company, gives a tour of the company's broadband fiber system.*

Molalla Communications Company mapped out a plan to meet the growing demand for more robust services by constructing an advanced active Ethernet fiber-to-the-home network. In 2011, the company received a \$22.5 million Telecommunications Infrastructure Program loan from USDA Rural Development. Along with the company's operating capital, this funding will support the construction of over 150 miles of main line fiber and over 225 miles of fiber service entrance fiber to bring more advanced telecommunication services directly to every household and business within the service area.

When complete, this project will provide approximately 6,000 residences, 300 small business, and more than 25 anchor institutions with robust voice services and gigabit broadband speeds. The expansion will support distance learning programs, the use of telemedicine at several local clinics, and increased teleworking opportunities for local residents. Local businesses are already beginning to benefit from the expanded services. A local artisan goat cheese producer used her new high-speed broadband connection to create a state-of-the-art website for her company. In addition, several local businesses, including a cabinet manufacturer, a circuit board developer, and a motorbike tank manufacturer, have begun selling their products worldwide, making this small, rural community a competitor in the global marketplace.

**Obligation Amount:** \$22.5 million loan

**Date of Obligation:** June 2011

**Congressional District:** Representative Schrader, District 5; Senators Wyden and Merkley

**Demographics:** Molalla and Mulino, Oregon

**Impact:** High quality broadband services provided to an additional 6,000 residences, 300 small business, and more than 25 anchor institutions, enabling distance learning programs, telemedicine use, and making small businesses competitive in the global marketplace.