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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Second round of grants, loans for rural broadband Internet projects opens today**  
*Kansas Internet service providers, organizations encouraged to apply for Recovery Act funding*

Internet service providers and other organizations throughout Kansas are encouraged to apply for the second round of federal funding for rural broadband Internet projects beginning today through March 15.

The Recovery Act funding is available through two federal programs:

**Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP)**

BIP makes loans and grants to Internet service providers for broadband infrastructure projects in rural areas. The program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service. There is \$2.2 billion in BIP funding available.



**Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP)**

BTOP provides grants to organizations such as non-profits, government entities, schools, libraries, hospitals and providers to fund broadband infrastructure, public computer centers and sustainable broadband adoption projects. The program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications Information Administration. There is \$2.6 billion in BTOP funding available.

Applicants can visit [www.ConnectKansas.org](http://www.ConnectKansas.org) for application information.

To assist applicants, the Kansas Department of Commerce will host a Connect Kansas Applicant Webinar on Friday, Feb. 19 at 10 a.m. at [www.ConnectKansas.org](http://www.ConnectKansas.org). (Space is limited, so applicants are encouraged to reserve their space immediately.) The Department has also posted Census block-level data and county-level broadband coverage maps at [www.ConnectKansas.org](http://www.ConnectKansas.org) that include the majority of service areas in the state. A complete statewide map for public consumption and utilization will be unveiled in March.

The first round of federal funding ran from July through August 2009, and awards are currently being announced on a rolling basis. From that first round, Kansas provider Rural Telephone Service Co. last month was awarded more than \$101 million in grants and loans through BIP for Internet infrastructure projects in rural Kansas. The Kansas Department of Commerce expects additional first-round Kansas applicants to receive awards in the coming months.

In addition to providing grants and loans to service providers and organizations, the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications Information Administration has issued awards to states for broadband mapping and planning. In November 2009, Kansas was awarded \$2 million to support Connect Kansas, the state's mapping and planning initiative.

For more information, visit [www.ConnectKansas.org](http://www.ConnectKansas.org) or contact Joe Monaco, Public Information Officer with the Kansas Department of Commerce, at (785) 296-3760 or [jmonaco@kansascommerce.com](mailto:jmonaco@kansascommerce.com).

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