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COMMERCE ANNOUNCES RECOVERY ACT INVESTMENT IN UTAH TO EXPAND BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS AND SPUR ECONOMIC GROWTH

WASHINGTON – The Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) today announced a \$13.4 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) investment to help bridge the technological divide, boost economic growth, create jobs, and improve education across the state of Utah.

The investment will allow the University of Utah to enhance and expand the Utah Education Network (UEN), which currently provides Internet service to more than 300 schools and other community anchor institutions. This project will extend fiber-based Ethernet broadband services to 130 additional elementary schools, public libraries, charter schools, and Head Start centers across the state, including a Head Start center that serves the Ute Indian Reservation. This project will significantly increase the speed and capacity of the Internet connections used at these locations by children, students, and teachers.

“In today’s society, if you don’t have regular access to high-speed Internet, you don’t have access to all the educational and employment opportunities it provides. Fast, reliable Internet connections can help Americans gain job training and skills, open doors for small businesses, and give students the opportunity to explore vast libraries and archives from their local school or library,” said Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator Lawrence E. Strickling. “Projects like the grant announced today are laying the foundation for strong, sustainable economic growth for years to come.”

NTIA’s Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), funded by the Recovery Act, provides grants to support the deployment of broadband infrastructure, enhance and expand public computer centers, and encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service.

NTIA received more than 1,800 applications proposing projects totaling nearly \$19 billion during the first BTOP funding round and is currently awarding grants on a rolling basis. Including the grant announced today, NTIA has now awarded 31 grants totaling more than \$610 million under the program. In addition, NTIA has awarded \$97 million in mapping and planning grants to 51 states and territories. NTIA is currently accepting BTOP applications through March 15, 2010 for a second round of funding.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided a total of \$7.2 billion to NTIA and the Department of Agriculture’s Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to fund projects that will expand

access to and adoption of broadband services. Of that funding, NTIA will utilize \$4.7 billion for grants to deploy broadband infrastructure in the United States, expand public computer center capacity, and encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service. NTIA will announce all grant awards by September 30, 2010.

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U.S. Department of Commerce's NTIA serves as the Executive Branch agency principally responsible for advising the President on communications and information policy. For further information about NTIA's BTOP grants, please visit <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants>.