



UNIVERSAL BROADBAND GRANTS FOR NEW YORK ANNOUNCED

New York Governor David A. Paterson today announced that nine public/private sector partnerships will receive funds to help promote the research, design and implementation of innovative solutions to create affordable broadband Internet access for underserved urban and rural communities throughout the state.

The New York State Council for Universal Broadband, which is charged with developing strategies to ensure every New Yorker has access to affordable, high-speed Internet service, met for the second time this week and the competitive grants were announced at that meeting. The funds will help build high-speed broadband access networks, foster equal and universal access in underserved areas, and develop digital literacy programs.

“In an age when our competitiveness depends on fast and easy access to information, too many communities in New York State still lack sufficient broadband access,” said Governor Paterson. “Improved broadband technologies can spur economic development, increase learning opportunities and connect more New Yorkers to the wide array of resources available online, including government services. The Council will provide strategic oversight as we work with these partnerships to ensure all New Yorkers have access to high-speed Internet and the skills necessary to get the most out of online tools.”

The Council was formed in December 2007 and charged with developing strategies to ensure every New Yorker has access to affordable, high-speed Internet service. It is comprised of 28 members representing state and local government, libraries, municipal associations, economic development, as well as secondary and higher education.

Dr. Melodie Mayberry-Stewart, New York’s Chief Information Officer, said: “We are very pleased with the initial response we received from this first round of broadband grant applications. Particularly striking was the level of local matching funds, the innovation of many of the proposals, and the broad nature of some of the proposed collaborations.”

New York State Association of Counties Executive Director Stephen J. Acquario, a member of the Governor’s Council on Universal Broadband, said: “High speed Internet is an essential communication tool for the 21st century. These grants will connect government and business organizations with their constituency and customers. We commend Governor Paterson for highlighting the need to continue this important Universal Broadband effort.”

In 2007, the New York State Legislature appropriated \$5 million to provide seed money to be awarded through the Council. To leverage the funds, the Council required a minimum dollar-for-dollar match in the form of cash, in-kind goods and services, or a combination of the two. The value of the matching cash and in-kind services from the nine award recipients totals more than \$15.1 million.

More than 50 applications were received for the first year of funding and the proposed 2008-09 budget includes \$15 million to continue the program.

Click here (www.state.ny.us/governor/press/pdf/press_0319082.pdf) for a list of recipients (PDF).



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