



News Release

**NoaNet awarded \$84M BTOP grant from NTIA to expand broadband access to the rural unserved and underserved areas in Washington State.**

(TACOMA, WA) March 1, 2010 -- Northwest Open Access Network (NoaNet) announced today that it is the lead entity of a consortium that has been awarded an \$84M federal stimulus grant as part of the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

NoaNet CEO Greg Marney expressed appreciation for the award on behalf of the consortium from Commerce Secretary Gary Locke during a formal announcement at the University of Washington Medical Center in Seattle, Washington Monday morning. Secretary Locke was joined by Congressman Jay Inslee and Washington Senator Patty Murray who have actively supported this project.

"Broadband access has the ability to empower communities and open markets," Rep. Jay Inslee said. "The Recovery act is helping to put people back to work today as well as build the economic foundation we need to create well paying jobs. Through this grant, NoaNet, the University of Washington and other Internet providers will be able to expand services to Washington state's rural communities, assist health providers in sharing information, and allow small businesses to connect with each other and the world."

NoaNet is a non-profit wholesale telecommunications corporation headquartered in Tacoma, Washington. NoaNet, in cooperation with a number of co-applicants, applied for the BTOP grant August 20, 2009 to expand its broadband middle mile fiber optic infrastructure to unserved and underserved areas in Washington State.

"NoaNet will build and coordinate the construction of fiber optic infrastructure in rural areas of Washington State in the next three years. We estimate this new fiber optic infrastructure will serve 126,000 rural citizens and will create hundreds of new jobs. The broadband access will help enable the same educational and employment opportunities in rural areas that we have in our metropolitan areas. Bridging the digital divide paves the way to creating sustainable economic growth in Washington State," said Greg Marney, Chief Executive Officer of NoaNet.

The project includes construction of over 800 miles of fiber optic cable and electronics to provide high capacity broadband access. The total cost of the project is \$106M which includes monetary and in-kind contributions. A minimum of a gigabit per second of broadband will be available to retail service providers to create new markets for business, rural citizens and improve Internet and broadband capabilities into libraries, medical and education centers, government and public safety agencies.

"Access to information is essential to build healthy, connected, and economically viable communities," Governor Chris Gregoire said. "By building out broadband infrastructure to remote parts of our state we connect people with better healthcare, new education options, research capabilities, and economic opportunities. The people of our state are well served by this funding and it will literally build a foundation for the future."

The co-applicants awarded in the project include Clallam, Franklin and Pacific Public Utility Districts, Port of Whitman County, County of Yakima, Sawtooth Technologies, and Black Rock Cable. Pacific Northwest Gigapop, Inland Northwest Health Services, the Washington State Library, South Central Worksource and the Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts (AWPHD) contributed to the overall design of the health and library networks as well as to the application itself.



"This grant will help NoaNet take a major step forward in extending its broadband network to rural and underserved areas in Washington, including tribal centers for the Makah, Jamestown S'Klallam and Shoalwater Bay tribes on the Olympic Peninsula," Rep. Norman Dicks said. "This was the goal of our effort 10 years ago to make available excess BPA fiber capacity for this publicly-operated, non-profit project to drive broadband access beyond the major cities in the Northwest."

NoaNet has received one of 65 grants awarded to date by the NTIA, with the total amount of the awards made by NTIA exceeding \$1.26B. The grants lead the way to bridge the technological divide, boost economic growth, create jobs and improve education and health care across the nation.

### **About NoaNet**

NoaNet is a non-profit mutual corporation providing wholesale telecommunications transport and is headquartered in Tacoma, Washington. It operates a reliable public open-access broadband communication network totaling over 1,500 fiber miles that provides rural areas access to broadband services. One of its purposes is to serve communities by bridging the digital divide to enhance economic opportunities for rural citizens. NoaNet's members are twelve public utility districts and a joint operating agency that have served wholesale customers in Washington State since 2000.

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