

## **ARRA Broadband Investment**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) - Broadband Stimulus Package - was recently announced by Vice President Joe Biden with national funding of over \$6 billion for broadband service in rural, unserved and underserved regions of the United States. This program will be awarded through a grant process. There will be three windows of opportunity to apply for the grant. The first window closes August 14, 2009. Grant recipients will be given notice by the end of 2009. The program will be administered by two organizations at the federal level:

The U.S. Department of Commerce – National Telecom & Information Administration has set aside \$4.7 billion for technology opportunities. It is broken down in this manner:

- \$3.9 billion for infrastructure investment
- \$200 million for increased computer center capacity
- \$250 million for sustainable adoption programs
- \$350 million for broadband mapping activities

The U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Utilities Service has set aside \$2.5 billion for the broadband, distance learning, and telemedicine program.

- Funding for existing loan, grant, and loan/grant programs
- Anticipate majority of funds to be made available for grants
- Program usually disperses monies directly to providers

Convergent Technology Partners has been asked by the State of Michigan, as part of their existing contract to assist in data collection, and serve as a collaborator between private and public entities and service providers, who might be interested in this program.

The State of Michigan is anticipating the benefits of the Broadband Stimulus Package for obtaining:

- Economic development job creation
- Better government (State and Local); reduced network and telecom costs and application sharing
- Educational and administrative application sharing
- Public access for retaining, small business and employment
- Greening tools for ecommerce and distance learning
- Connectivity for unserved/underserved citizens/businesses
- Health IT, telehealth, and telemedicine capabilities
- Homeland security at border crossings and critical infrastructure across the state's roadways and bridges

Finally, through the grant process, the State of Michigan wants to see the following goals addressed as an outcome of the Broadband Stimulus Package:

1. Expand and upgrade broadband service to unserved/underserved populations across the state
2. Transform Michigan's economic competitiveness by making affordable broadband accessible to any business throughout the state
3. Ensure a better, more efficient government for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
4. Strengthen Michigan's ability to monitor borders and critical infrastructure