Nearly $50 million awarded for broadband projects to support remote learning, economic development

Friday August 28, 2020

Boise, Idaho – Governor Brad Little announced today the Idaho Department of Commerce awarded $48.9 million in federal coronavirus relief funds for 102 projects across Idaho that support improved broadband infrastructure, equipment, and services.

The grants help fund broadband connectivity for more than 43,000 underserved households, the majority of which are in rural communities of less than 3,000 residents. Public safety and local government entities received 23 of the 102 grants awarded.

“In the short-term, this investment in broadband connectivity will assist with our ongoing COVID-19 response by supporting student remote learning, telehealth, work-from-home opportunities in more parts of the state, and improved government services,” Governor Little said. “In the long-term, we will see better opportunities for economic development in underserved parts of Idaho.”

The grant program provides funding resources for broadband infrastructure investment and associated equipment for underserved households, public safety organizations, local governments, and medical clinics and hospital facilities. The priority was to fund projects that serve communities of less than 3,000 persons and/or communities that are unserved with 10 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload or less speeds.

Idaho Commerce began accepting grant applications on June 29, 2020, and received 137 applications requesting $83 million in grant funding. The applications were then posted for public comment and additional review.

"We appreciate the $50 million in CARES Act funding approved by the Governor's Coronavirus Financial Advisory Committee for new Idaho broadband infrastructure in areas identified by the Governor's Broadband Task Force last year," said Commerce Director Tom Kealey. "These projects will help many rural communities and tens of thousands of households with new high-speed internet service for remote learning, working, local government services and telehealth access.”

For more information and a complete list of all awards, visit **https://commerce.idaho.gov/broadband/** (https://commerce.idaho.gov/broadband/).

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