



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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HALEY BARBOUR  
GOVERNOR

April 14, 2009

Dear Sir or Madam,

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, otherwise known as "the stimulus package." The goal of this stimulus package is to inject \$787 billion dollars in our nation's economy, with \$7.2 billion dedicated to broadband infrastructure. The broadband portion, known as, "Broadband Technology Opportunities Program" (BTOP), will expand broadband access capabilities throughout the country, specifically targeting rural and underserved areas.

According to the most recent information, funds will be distributed through two federal agencies: \$4.7 billion through the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and \$2.5 billion through the Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS). Mississippi anticipates it will receive approximately \$50 million, if the money is proportionately allocated; however, the allocation method has not yet been announced. We do know that the NTIA grants will be awarded competitively and each state is guaranteed to receive at least one grant. NTIA and RUS have indicated they intend to release these funds in three stages, with the first stage in early fall 2009, followed by two more in 2010.

The five goals identified by NTIA and RUS for broadband recovery funds are: 1) create jobs; 2) close the broadband gap; 3) stimulate investment in broadband; 4) spread high-speed access to schools, universities, libraries, community centers, job training centers, hospitals and public safety personnel; and 5) encourage demand for broadband. The BTOP in particular is designed to accelerate broadband deployment in unserved and underserved areas and improve access to broadband by public safety agencies.

Due to the nature of the program and the tight time frame, I intend to recommend to NTIA one application that comprehensively addresses these goals.

Under my direction the Mississippi Broadband Task Force has been created. This task force consists of the following members: Serena Clark, Office of the Governor; David Litchlitter and Craig Orgeron, Department of Information Technology; Vickie Helfrich, Public Utilities Staff; Marie Antoon, Mississippi EDNET Institute, Inc.; and Joey Deason, Mississippi Development Authority. This task force is charged with reviewing proposals and submitting a consultative report to me by June 1, 2009 at which time I will review and submit the final NTIA application for the State of Mississippi.

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In this vein, I invite you to submit a written proposal, not to exceed 10 pages (including attachments), to the Office of the Governor on or before April 30, 2009, at 5:00 p.m. Written proposals will be evaluated by the Mississippi Broadband Task Force and a yet to be determined number of proposals will receive an invitation to do an in-person presentation at a time to be determined. Each proposal should specify how it will meet the five goals described above. Information related to project costs, timeframe for implementation, and an explanation of ongoing sustainability should also be included. If any portion of the proposal contains confidential or proprietary information it should be clearly marked as such.

Should you have any further questions, please contact Marie Sanderson at 601-576-2014 or Serena Clark in my office at 601-576- 2013.

Sincerely,



Haley Barbour

HB/mtb