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ISSUE ALERT

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NTIA Pushes Back Schedule for Broadband Stimulus Grants

MIDWEST DIVISION

Last week, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) submitted a status report to Congress regarding the ARRA economic stimulus broadband loans and grants (BTOP or Broadband Technology Opportunities Program). In the report, the NTIA provided a new schedule which pushes back the original time frame. The NTIA will not begin accepting and reviewing grant applications until July, 2009 and will not begin distributing the first ARRA broadband stimulus grants until Fourth Quarter 2009.

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The NTIA and Rural Utility Service (RUS) are still formulating the rules and criteria that will govern the distribution of the funds and intend to publish the rules for applying for the broadband stimulus funds in a Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) order in June, 2009. The NTIA will accept applications for the initial round of grants from July to September, 2009 and award the funds by the end of December 2009.

Since the RUS has previously stated that they are working together with the NTIA to develop a joint grant application, it is anticipated that the RUS will follow a similar timeline. Based on recent conversations with RUS, we anticipate their NOFA being released June 22nd. (Note: It may be a jointly issued NOFA from both RUS and NTIA.) The RUS anticipates disbursing grant money beginning in early November. The extra time provides applicants with additional time to develop partnerships and a sustainable business plan around their broadband deployments.

WESTERN DIVISION

The New NTIA Schedule is as follows:

- Procurement for Grants Program Assistance Services: March – June, 2009
- Award Contract for Grants Program Support: June, 2009
- Preparation for Initial Solicitation for Proposals: April – June, 2009
- Publish Notice of Funds Availability: June, 2009
- Submission of Grant Applications: July – September, 2009
- Initial Proposal Processing and Review: September – December, 2009
- Initial Grant Awards Made: October – December, 2009
- Second Solicitation for Proposals: October – December, 2009
- Third Solicitation for Proposals: April – June, 2010
- All Awards to Be Made by September 30, 2010

A copy of the NTIA's BTOP Quarterly Program Status Report dated May 18, 2009 can be viewed at the following link:

http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants/BTOPQuarterlyReport_090518.pdf.

For further information or if you have any questions, please call your GVNW consultant or any one of the GVNW offices listed. GVNW stands ready to assist you in developing your application.

SOUTHWEST DIVISION

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