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**CONTACT: Paul Mounds (Larson) 860-278-8888**

**LARSON, MEMBERS OF CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCE \$93 MILLION STATEWIDE BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS GRANT**

**HARTFORD, CT** – Today, members of Connecticut’s Congressional delegation announced a \$93 million Recovery Act investment that will help improve broadband internet access to improve the state’s education system and public safety capabilities. The funding was announced at two events, one this morning in Hartford and the second this afternoon in Stamford, where Congressional delegation members were joined by Lawrence E. Strickling, Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information at the U.S. Department of Commerce.

This \$93 million federal grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration will benefit residents across the state, improving public safety and increasing access to the internet for students of all ages, and the general public who use public library computer access. The Connecticut Department of Information Technology, in its grant application, noted that this award could create nearly 1,200 jobs. Connecticut will be able to access the funds over a three year period.

For Connecticut’s K-12 school districts, colleges and universities, public libraries and public computing centers, this project aims to deliver 100 megabits per second service. The project would extend 675 miles of new fiber optics, install the necessary hardware to support the 100 Mbps service, including three new hub routers and offer user support to all Connecticut Education Network members through the Connecticut State Department of Information.

Connecticut's public safety system will benefit immensely from this grant. In 2006, a study by the Connecticut Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications recommended the establishment of a new, integrated public safety data network. The study also found that the network infrastructure systems that Connecticut public safety agencies utilize barely met the bandwidth requirements and were grossly inadequate for near or long term projected future data transmission requirements. So this grant will fund a two phase project to update the network infrastructure.

"High-speed Internet access is increasingly important for communities to thrive in today's digital economy," said Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator Lawrence E. Strickling. "This Recovery Act investment will improve public safety and educational services throughout the state, create jobs, and help lay the groundwork for sustainable economic growth."

"This critical funding for broadband infrastructure represents an investment in Connecticut's future," said U.S. Senator Chris Dodd. "Not only will this funding help create Connecticut jobs now, but it will also help to build a strong foundation for long-term growth and success, which will benefit businesses, students, and communities across the state well into the 21st century."

"Infrastructure is the lifeblood of our economy, and broadband represents the cutting edge infrastructure of the 21st century. In order to compete with the advanced and emerging power centers across the globe, these investments are absolutely critical. With this funding, our state will not only be able to preserve and create critical jobs – it will open doors to new jobs for all our residents. And it will spur technological advancements in education, health and public safety that will provide longer-term economic benefits. I look forward to seeing these projects implemented, and I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure that Connecticut remains a leader in technological innovation, and that all our residents have the tools they need to succeed in the 21st century economy," Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (CT-3).

***"This funding will greatly increase broadband access in Connecticut by enhancing public safety capabilities for our first responders, improving educational services for our students, and upgrading the overall broadband infrastructure in our state's underserved regions. The Recovery Act provided targeted investments throughout the nation to spur the economy and grow jobs. The Broadband USA funding will help facilitate economic growth and create local jobs in the state, specifically in our urban and rural communities,"*** Congressman John Larson (CT-1).

“Increasing access to faster internet service can do so many things for so many people across the state, including help people find jobs faster, open up new doors for students of all ages, and assist our public safety officials. And installing this technology won’t happen without supporting jobs in our communities. It’s a huge win for the state and our future economic growth,” said Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5).

“I welcome this transformational project for eastern Connecticut and the entire state. The benefits to our economy, education, and public safety are significant and far-reaching. This broadband upgrade will spark further economic recovery through immediate job creation and a long term competitive edge for our region.” Congressman Joe Courtney (CT-2).

“This award is another example of our work to create jobs in the near term, while also building a foundation for sustainable job creation in the long term,” said Congressman Jim Himes (CT-4). “Projects that will benefit from this investment will connect those who have, for too long, been without the full economic, educational and social benefits of high-speed internet access.”

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