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## **USDA-Rural Development Announces Funding for Rural Broadband Project**

### *\$1.4 Million Grant will help Connect the Arctic to the World*

**ANCHORAGE**, Alaska – July 23, 2015 – U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development Alaska State Director Jim Nordlund today announced that USDA is providing a total of \$1,418,502 in funding for a critical broadband project in rural Alaska. The grant will provide Arctic Slope Telephone Association Cooperative, Inc. (ASTAC) the means to continue increasing its capacity to provide customers with access to high speed broadband.

Funding is being provided through USDA's [Community-Oriented Connectivity Broadband Grant Program](#), and will be used to allow ASTAC to prepare the Point Hope access network for an undersea fiber connection targeted for 2016 – 2017. Point Hope has traditionally been served by satellite middle mile service. Satellite bandwidth is prohibitively expensive, has limited capacity and high latency.

"This award will provide the Point Hope service area with the ability to construct a broadband network to provide individuals and businesses with high-speed Internet service. It will also prepare the network for an international undersea fiber connection project currently planned for construction within the next two years," said Nordlund.

Awardees must construct and operate a broadband system that makes service of at least five megabits per second available to residential and business customers within the proposed service area as well as provide a community center where residents can access broadband service free of charge and offer free broadband service to critical community facilities for at least two years.

Since 2009, USDA-Rural Development has invested over \$1.5 billion in more than 220 rural Alaskan communities. These investments in housing, community facilities, business, energy, water and sewer, telecom and electric have helped to grow rural Alaska's economy and enhance the quality of life for its residents.

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