

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture: Announces \$28 million to connect people in Southwest Wisconsin to high-speed internet

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STEVENS POINT, Wis., Aug. 21, 2023 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Wisconsin State Director Julie Lassa today announced a \$28 million [ReConnect Loan](#) to Reedsburg Utility Commission to provide reliable, affordable high-speed internet to nearly 10,000 people in Southwest Wisconsin.

“Reliable high-speed internet connects business owners to customers and new markets, expands educational opportunities for students, and enables people to access medical care without leaving their home,” said Lassa. “I’m pleased to announce this \$28 million ReConnect Loan to the Reedsburg Utility Commission as it will bring new opportunities to residents and businesses in rural Southwest Wisconsin. It’s part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to investing in rural infrastructure for every American.” ([Audio: Mp3, 27 seconds, 644 KB](#))

Reedsburg Utility Commission will use the \$28 million ReConnect Loan to deploy a fiber-to-the-premises network benefiting 9,661 people, 319 businesses, 689 farms and eight educational facilities in Richland, Dane, Iowa, Juneau, and Sauk counties. Reedsburg Utility Commission will make high-speed internet affordable by participating in the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

Today’s high-speed internet investments are part of the fourth funding round of the ReConnect Program. Many residents and businesses in rural areas would not have high-speed internet service without the ReConnect Program, as the program is

a key part of the Administration's *Internet for All* initiative to connect everyone in America to high-speed internet by 2030. Today's announcement includes \$667 million in USDA investments in Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and the Marshall Islands.

A [full list of projects](#) from today's announcement is available online.

Background: ReConnect Program

Applicants to ReConnect Program funding must serve a rural area that lacks access to service at speeds of 100 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 20 Mbps upload. Applicants must also commit to building facilities capable of providing high-speed internet service with speeds of 100 Mbps (download and upload) to every location in the proposed service area. Additionally, to ensure that rural households that need internet service can afford it, all awardees will be required to apply to participate in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's Affordable Connectivity Program. The ACP offers a discount of up to \$30 per month toward internet service to qualifying low-income households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal Lands.

Background: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

The [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) provides \$65 billion to ensure every American has access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet through a historic investment in broadband infrastructure deployment. The legislation also lowers costs for internet service and helps close the digital divide, so that more Americans can take full advantage of the opportunities provided by internet access.

To learn more about investment resources for rural areas, visit www.rd.usda.gov or contact the nearest [USDA Rural Development state office](#).

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, tribal and high-poverty areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov.



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