

Watch for major changes in government in 2010



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Public officials are struggling as 2010 nears. Citizens and taxpayers are not happy! Elected officials and public employees are frustrated...and there is little relief in sight for either segment of the population.

The recession has played havoc with government budgets and there is nothing to suggest that funding will be increased in 2010. In fact, at every level of government, in every state, public officials say they expect only more problems in the

coming year.

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First installment of \$7.2 billion broadband awards cited

Initial \$183 million to fund 18 projects in 17 different states

The initial \$183 million of \$7.2 billion set aside in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for expanding broadband throughout the country has been awarded. Seventeen states are the recipients of these first awards. Among the recipients of the first round of funding is the city of Bangor, Maine, which was awarded \$25.4 million in grants for broadband infrastructure in rural and disadvantaged areas of the state. Another \$2.4 million is headed to Ohio to help boost economic development and connect the local community to the smart energy grid.

The grant and loan program kicked off with the multi-million-dollar awards, and will be followed in the next two months by an additional \$2 billion that will be made available on a rolling basis. Eighteen projects will benefit from the initial funding. The funding from the Recovery Act will be matched by more than \$46 million in public and private sector funds. The goal of the funding is to expand broadband, particularly to communities that have little or no access to the technology.

Some \$4.7 billion of the \$7.2 billion total will come through the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration and \$2.5 million will be distributed through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service. It is hoped that the funds will provide expanded connectivity among education institutions, enable remote medical consultations and attract new businesses that rely on the Internet.

There are four different types of awards. Middle Mile Awards (\$121.6 million) will build and improve connections to communities lacking sufficient broadband access and Last Mile Awards (\$51.4 million) will connect users such as residences, hospitals and schools to their community broadband infrastructure. Public Computing awards (\$7.3 million) will expand computer center capacity for public use in libraries, community colleges and other public venues and Sustainable Adoption awards (\$2.4 million) will fund innovative projects that promote broadband demand with populations where the technology has been underutilized. To view the complete list of awards, click [HERE](#) and look under "Recent Reports."

For information about these and other funding opportunities,

USDA announces \$116.9M for water loans, grants

Nineteen states have rural areas that will benefit from funding

Nineteen states will share \$116.9 million in water and environmental project loans and grants being awarded this week by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The funds are from the Recovery Act and are part of \$2.08 billion the agency has already announced. The funds will support improvements to infrastructure in rural areas of the country.

The largest amount announced is a \$21.5 million loan and \$17.7 million grant to the town of Chatham, Massachusetts, for wastewater system improvements. The second largest allocation is a \$14 million loan and \$6 million grant to the city of Somerset, Kentucky, for water system improvements.

The money will fund projects such as an expansion of the water system in Dallas County, Alabama, that will include construction of new water distribution lines to approximately 100 new residential customers in unserved areas. Generators also will be purchased for backup power.

The funding is administered by USDA Rural Development's Water and Environmental Program, which uses the funding to ensure that the necessary investments are made in water and wastewater infrastructure to deliver safe drinking water and protect the environment in rural areas. For a complete list of the projects and amounts funded, click [HERE](#) and look under "Recent Reports."

For information about these and other funding opportunities,
contact Reagan Weil or Richard Hartmann at 512-531-3900

\$60 million Health IT program funding available

Barriers to use of technology to be researched with grant monies

To help identify and remove existing barriers to the adoption and use of health information technology (Health IT), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has announced a \$60 million program to fund research into that issue. Experts see Health IT as a way of improving the quality and efficiency of health care provided to all Americans.

The Strategic Health IT Advanced Research Projects (SHARP) program will identify and address barriers to Health IT adoption in these areas:

Security and health information technology research to address problems associated with developing security and risk mitigation policies and technologies to build public trust as these systems become more common;

Patient-centered cognitive support research to make health IT more patient-focused and to allow for its use in the day-to-day practice of medicine to support providers as they care for patients;

Health care application and network platform architectures research to help develop architectures necessary to allow for the secure, private and accurate electronic exchange and use of health information; and

Secondary use of electronic health record data research to help enhance the use of health IT to improve the quality of health care, overall population health and clinical research while protecting patient privacy.

These Recovery Act funds will be awarded in these areas for four years. Applications for the funding are due Jan. 25, 2010. Awards are expected to be made in March of next year. For more information, click [HERE](#).

Grant programs seek to build health IT workforce

Training, development of workers supports adoption of new technology
As the country seeks to improve on and increase the use of health information technology (health IT), two grant programs have been announced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. The grants are intended to supplement the training

and development of a skilled workforce that can support the widespread adoption of health IT.

These workforce grants (*Information Technology Professionals in Health Care: Program of Assistance for University-Based Training Programs* and *Information Technology Professionals in Health Care: Competency Examination for Individuals*) are funded by the Recovery Act and each will have \$32 million to award to establish university-based certificate and advanced degree health IT training programs. Another \$6 million will be used to develop a health IT competency exam program. Approximately \$80 million in workforce program grants was announced earlier this year for community college partnerships and for curriculum development centers.

Officials expect between eight and 12 one-time funding grants for the University-Based Training Program that will quickly increase the number of trained workforce professionals. Awards are for 39 months and are open to colleges and universities. The Competency Exam Program is a one-time award to support one entity for the development and administration of a set of health IT competency exams. Application deadline for both programs is Jan. 25, 2010, with awards slated in March of next year.

For more information, click [HERE](#).

Stimulus news briefs

\$125 million added to enhance small business loan program

After running out of funding from the Recovery Act to make small business loans more affordable and more appealing, new legislation has added \$125 million to extend the Small Business Administration (SBA) program and enhance SBA lending. The original economic-stimulus legislation provided \$730 million to the SBA, including \$375 million to increase the guarantee and waive fees, but those funds were used up by Nov. 23.

Among the enhancements are higher education loan guarantees of up to 90 percent on SBA's primary 7(a) and 504 loan programs, as well as the waiving of fees on most of those loans. During the program, some \$16.5 billion in loans was provided to small businesses. Weekly loan volume increased by more than 75 percent compared to pre-stimulus. The additional funding is expected to support an additional \$4.5 billion in loans.

Loans that were approved but not funded before the money ran out are now awaiting an infusion from this new funding. There are currently 1,069 of those loans totaling \$530 million. Those on the list will be the first to benefit from the new money, followed by new loan approvals starting this week, the agency said.

Texas, Florida, Chicago, California could be finalists in high-speed rail awards

The national rumor mill is saying that Florida, Texas, California and the Chicago area are the four finalists for the billions of dollars being set aside by the Recovery Act for high-speed rail. While Florida officials may have started the rumor, U.S. Department of Transportation officials say no short list has been announced because they are still evaluating proposals.

There have been 45 requests for some of the high-speed rail funding. Those requests come from two dozens states and total \$50 billion. Another \$7 billion is being sought by more than 200 applications from 34 other states for projects in the planning stage or for smaller projects.

Florida nearly missed out completely after being told the state would need to show its support for commuter-rail projects to be considered for high-speed rail funding. What followed was a bill that passed out of the Florida Legislature just weeks ago that laid the foundation for the creation of SunRail, a commuter-rail project scheduled to be up and running in central Florida by 2012. Florida is asking for \$2.6 billion in Recovery Act funds for a high-speed line that would link Orlando with Lakeland and Tampa. In California, voters recently approved borrowing \$9 billion for a train to link Los Angeles and San Francisco and eventually extend east to Las Vegas. The state is asking for \$4.5 billion in stimulus funds. Texas is seeking \$1.8 billion for its projects and Chicago hopes to secure \$11.5 billion for a train that would link that city to St. Louis.

What the states are doing

Reconstruction and realignment of 1,900 feet of roadway and the demolition of a city-owned building in Quincy, Massachusetts, will be paid for with \$8.1 million in recovery funds. The roadway will eventually connect a bridge to provide motorist and pedestrian access over the rail corridor on Revere Road.

The Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport in Dallas, Texas, has been awarded \$2.3 million in recovery funds to rehabilitate a runway critical to the airport's capacity. The project is expected to begin early next month and will include the rehabilitation of various concrete slabs and joint repairs on the 13,400 foot runway.

A sanitary sewer expansion project is on tap in Avon Lake, Ohio, that could benefit from stimulus funding. The city may be eligible for up to \$5 million in Stimulus Act funds through the state's Water Pollution Control Loan Fund. The project would add more than 50 miles of new sewer line, including pump stations and a 14-mile force main to carry water. It would replace individual septic systems.

In Nashville, Tennessee, officials are heralding the receipt of \$1.8 million in federal stimulus funds that have been awarded for broadband mapping and planning. The map will show the availability of broadband in the state in anticipation of expansion of high-speed Internet services.

With the help of \$6 million in stimulus funds, state bonds and other assistance programs, three Section 8 housing complexes in Salem, Oregon, will be preserved. Renovations to the three units will make more than 135 affordable housing units available to low-income families.

Stimulus funding of \$1.8 million is going to the state of Ohio to map broadband Internet access statewide. In 2008, the state reported that broadband was available to more than 90 percent of the state's residents but that low-income areas, rural areas and areas where rugged terrain exist were among those without high-speed access.

Renovation and repair of many city parks in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, are on tap after the city voted to borrow nearly \$4.8 million from federal economic stimulus funds. Of that figure, \$1.7 million will provide upgrades to parks and \$1.7 million will be used to resurface approximately 15 miles of city streets. The park funds will rebuild playgrounds, resurface tennis courts, pave parking lots and make repairs to city recreation centers.

Solar panel installations and updated air conditioning controls in county buildings will be paid for in San Diego County, California, by \$5.1 million in stimulus funds for energy conservation projects. The funds also will be used to encourage green building practices in the community.

The roof of the police station in Woburn, Massachusetts, will be replaced in part due to stimulus funding. The city recently was awarded a \$174,600 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy that will pay for approximately half of the \$330,000 project.

Green upgrades to homes and office buildings in Baltimore City, Maryland, will be paid for from the \$6.4 million in stimulus funds being set aside for energy efficiency programs there. A grant program will be created to provide funding for making cost-saving energy improvements to buildings and facilities throughout the city.

Three residential buildings and a new bunkhouse will be built from federal stimulus funds at the Seedskaadee National Wildlife Refuge in southwest Wyoming. A total of \$2.3 million in federal funds has been allocated for the project.

A total of \$28 million in stimulus funds will go toward a \$34.8 million project to build a new four-lane entrance road to the South Florida Polytechnic campus in Lakeland, Florida. The 5.7-mile road will include a loop through campus. The remainder of the funding will come from Department of Transportation funds that became available when other projects came in under bid.

In Franklin, Tennessee, \$1.8 million in stimulus funding grant money will be used to replace and upgrade elevators at seven high-rise apartment buildings that are part of the city's Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency.

The City of Farmington, New Mexico, will use \$800,000 in stimulus funds to purchase four new trolley buses.

Lee County, Florida, has already contracted to widen I-75 to six lanes north from Colonial Boulevard. The state's transportation department, using part of \$18 million in stimulus dollars awarded last September, will award a contract in 2020 to widen the next portion, from State Road 82 to Luckett Road.

The City of Fridley, Minnesota, will transfer some of its \$17 million in new bonding power through the federal stimulus package to companies that will work on the \$14 million project that will build a new Fridley Medical Center. The building's owners sell shares to private investors in the municipal bond market.

Transportation officials in Montpelier, Vermont, are hopeful they will receive a \$73 million federal stimulus fund grant to help expand passenger rail service from Rutland to Burlington. The state has applied for numerous funding packages to help upgrade railroad tracks on the western side of the state. Upgrading tracks will allow the state to expand Amtrak's Ethan Allen Express train that now travels between New York City and Rutland.

Other national news

Veterans center in New Mexico to get funding

The first installment of a three-year, \$1.6 million federal grant has been made to the New Mexico Veterans' Integration Center. The funds will be used to expand the current facility to 50-room capacity. The center is currently leasing more than 30 rooms in an Albuquerque hotel to house veterans.

Florida city to review new city hall project

A committee has met twice to review RFPs for a \$20 million facility and the 18 bids received last August for a new city hall project in Homestead, Florida. The committee and city officials are studying the costs of maintaining the city hall at its current location compared to building a new downtown facility at a different location. Their efforts eventually will lead to a decision whether to move forward or drop the project. The project would include a 60,000-square-foot, three-story building for which the city also has requested \$1 million in economic stimulus funding. The new facility is in order because the city has outgrown the space and several departments throughout the city need to be consolidated.

City of Rice gets funding for sidewalk project, sewer upgrade

The City of Rice, Texas, will complete its longest sidewalk project thanks to a grant from the Safe Routes to School program. The city received \$800,000 toward the projects. The city also recently qualified for \$350,000 in sewer upgrades.

Earmarks in defense bill spread funds into Pensacola

Hundreds of millions of federal dollars will be shared by military bases around Pensacola, Florida, as a result of passage of the federal defense appropriation bill. Much of that funding will be for construction projects.

Interest indicated in Sacramento arena proposal

Seven proposals showing developer interest in a new Sacramento arena have been received by city officials and a sports and entertainment task force. In addition to a new arena, officials also are studying the possibility of renovating the existing Arco Arena and reviewing a current proposal at Cal Expo. Officials say the current arena, home to the Sacramento Kings basketball team, is outdated and should be replaced. The proposals will be made public at an open house on Jan. 14, 2010.

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Calendar of events

DOE announces lineup of webinars for ARRA recipients

The U.S. Department of Energy is hosting Webinars for grant, loan or other non-contractor recipients regarding reporting on the use of Recovery Act funding. To join one of these webinars, a recipient will need to take the following steps: Log onto www.JoinWebinar.com, type a Webinar ID (see below for ID for each day/time) and type in his or her e-mail address. After hitting "Continue," participants will be required to enter their first and last names for the e-mail address provided in (3). After clicking the "Register Now" button, participants will receive an automatically generated e-mail identifying the Web site to log into to see the webinar, as well as phone number to call into should the registrant's computer lack speakers to hear the webinar. Recipients can register at any time, including during the webinar.

The Schedule/Webinar ID for Grant, Loan, or other non-Contractor Recipients:

- Session 9: Monday, January 4, 1:00 pm EST. Webinar ID: 669984993
- Session 10: Tuesday, January 5, 1:00 pm EST. Webinar ID: 287344153
- Session 11: Wednesday, January 6, 1:00 pm EST. Webinar ID: 194522656
- Session 12: Thursday, January 7, 1:00 pm EST. Webinar ID: 381404929
- Session 13: Friday, January 8, 1:00 pm EST. Webinar ID: 423811153

The Schedule/Webinar ID for Contractors:

- Session 9: Monday, January 4, 2:30 pm EST. Webinar ID: 418682416
- Session 10: Tuesday, January 5, 2:30 pm EST. Webinar ID: 175930152
- Session 11: Wednesday, January 6, 2:30 pm EST. Webinar ID: 545543984
- Session 12: Thursday, January 7, 2:30 pm EST. Webinar ID: 365590672
- Session 13: Friday, January 8, 2:30 pm EST. Webinar ID: 600112184

If you have any questions regarding the content of the upcoming webinar presentations being offered on DOE Recovery Act Reporting or would like assistance choosing the most appropriate webinar, please contact the Department of Energy Recovery Act Clearinghouse at 1-888-363-7289.

TxDOT plans webinars for minority, women-owned businesses

A new series of webinars targeting small, minority and women-owned businesses in construction and professional services in Texas will begin Feb. 3, 2010, through the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) Business Outreach and Program (BOP) Services branch. These webinars are an extension of the external online 2009 TxDOT seminars that cover topics ranging from how to become a pre-qualified bidder on TxDOT contracts to online access of bid lettings and contract plans and more. Each session provides information to contractors, suppliers and small businesses relating to how TxDOT operates with external parties, how to better understand these processes and procedures and how to improve opportunities and obtain contracts at TxDOT. The webinars are open to potential contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, DBEs and other small businesses. Each webinar is limited and registration slots are on a first-come, first-served basis. More information will be available after Jan. 15, 2010, at www.txdot.gov. Questions may be forwarded to TxDOT-BOP-Webinars@dot.state.tx.us or by calling 1-866-480-2518, Option 2. Applying for the webinars does not guarantee a spot to participate.

Final TxDOT business outreach conference dates announced

The last two sessions of the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) Business Outreach and Program (BOP) Services Small Business Briefing conferences have been announced for April 1, 2010, in Dallas and June 15, 2010, in Texarkana. The conference goal is to provide small and minority-owned business communities an opportunity to learn more about contracting opportunities with TxDOT. Information will be available to help them do business with the agency and the State of Texas. The sessions not only allow small businesses to be introduced to TxDOT and other state agencies, but also allow them to learn more

about the economic development opportunities in their regions. It also allows the agencies to show the myriad of opportunities available for small and minority businesses in the state. For more information, click [HERE](#) or call 1.866.480.2518, Option 2.

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All 50 states have own recovery Web sites


All 50 of the states and the District of Columbia now have their own "recovery" sites where citizens can track where ARRA dollars are being spent in their respective states. The states are charged with ensuring accountability and transparency in how the funds are spent and their Web sites show the projects being funded and the amount of ARRA funds allocated. For links to each of the state and District of Columbia recovery Web sites, [HERE](#).

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