

eNATOA

2009 Retrospective: 2010 Preview:  
Hot Issues in Communications

The National Broadband Plan and the  
Broadband Stimulus Program

December 14, 2009

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# The National Broadband Plan

- **The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act**
  - FCC must propose National Broadband Plan to Congress by February 17, 2010
  - NBP must include detailed strategies for making broadband available and affordable to all Americans, and “for use of broadband infrastructure and services in advancing consumer welfare, civic participation, public safety and homeland security, community development, health care delivery, energy independence and efficiency, education, worker training, private sector investment, entrepreneurial activity, job creation and economic growth, and other national purposes.”
  - Coordination with BTOP/BIP, mapping programs

## The National Broadband Plan - 2009

- FCC formed the Omnibus Broadband Initiative Task Force, with Blair Levin as its director
- Consultations with NTIA/RUS on definitions of “broadband,” “unserved,” “underserved,” and “open access”
- General notice of inquiry plus dozens of targeted inquiries
- Hearings in Washington and around US
- Special reports (e.g., Harvard Berkman Center, CITI, NYU)
- Stakeholder meetings, including NATOA, US Broadband Coalition

# The National Broadband Plan – 2010

- **FCC Timetable**

- Policy Options for Commission 12/16/09
- In January 2010, draft plan, but will accept feedback
- Report to Congress on February 17, 2009

- **Key Substantive Issues**

- Don't look for big, bold goals (FCC: \$350 Billion for FTTH)
- Fiber to community anchor institutions; emphasis on multi-party, multi-beneficiary, trans-sectoral networks
- More emphasis on adoption/use than deployment
- Emphasis on wireless and access to more wireless spectrum
- Universal Service Fund reform
- "Poles and holes"
- Community broadband

## The Broadband Stimulus Program – 2009

- ARRA appropriated \$7.2 Billion for Broadband
- NTIA and RUS geared up via notice of inquiry, various hearings
- In July, NTIA/RUS issued NOFA, guidelines, Q&A, etc.
  - For \$4 billion in infrastructure, public computing center, and sustainable adoption programs, NOFA adopted restrictive definitions, difficult burdens of proof, complex processes, short deadlines
- In August, NTIA/RUS received 2200 proposals totaling \$28 billion
- Objections filed to 80% of proposals
- NTIA/RUS currently in “Due Diligence” with a number of projects
- First approvals in Dec., then rolling basis through February 2010

## The Broadband Stimulus Program – 2010

- Winning Round One applicants must negotiate contracts with RUS/NTIA, start complex compliance processes
- There will be a single Round Two
- NTIA/RUS have sought comments on Round Two rules:
  - How to simplify procedures?
  - How to ease burden of proving “unserved,” “underserved,” “rural” and “remote”?
  - Should NTIA/RUS emphasize regional, multi-purpose, multi-user projects ?
  - Tweak “open access”?
- NTIA seeking Section 477 data from FCC
- We’ll learn a great deal from new NOFA, Round One winners