



## **News for Immediate Release**

**Feb. 18, 2010**

### **Governor Rendell: Pennsylvania Receives \$128 Million in Federal Recovery Act Funds to Expand Broadband Infrastructure**

**Harrisburg** – Governor Edward G. Rendell today announced that Pennsylvania will receive more than \$128 million in two federal Recovery Act grants to expand broadband infrastructure in underserved areas and to directly connect critical community institutions to enhance healthcare delivery, education, workforce development, and public safety.

“Broadband is a key driver for economic development, public safety, education, health care, and job creation. Without question, broadband connectivity is the life-blood of the digital economy,” Governor Rendell said.

The Pennsylvania Research and Education Network, or PennREN, will receive more than \$99.6 million to develop a 1,700-mile fiber network to expand broadband Internet access and directly connect 60 community anchor institutions in 39 counties across South and Central Pennsylvania. These include public and private universities, K-12 schools, public libraries, public broadcasting facilities, and medical facilities.

PennREN is a partnership of leading universities, healthcare providers, library associations, and other key institutions.

In addition, the state will receive a \$28.8 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant to help fund a \$36 million “middle mile” project to expand broadband infrastructure in northern Pennsylvania. Broadband infrastructure is necessary for high-volume, high-speed Internet connectivity.

Topography, distance from telecommunications facilities and lower population density increase complexity and cost of developing broadband infrastructure between I-80 and the Pennsylvania/New York border. The middle mile project will expand infrastructure in this area building upon publicly owned assets already in place for the statewide interoperable public safety radio network.

“One important consideration for this grant was that the commonwealth already has a substantial tower infrastructure in place,” Governor Rendell said. “That means we can start working right away. Northern Pennsylvania is indeed ‘shovel-ready,’ which is a necessary requirement for receiving federal Recovery funds.”

The grant has been awarded to the Governor's Office of Administration by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration under the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program.

To learn more about how Recovery Act funds are benefiting Pennsylvania residents and businesses, visit [www.recovery.pa.gov](http://www.recovery.pa.gov)

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