

Memo

To: Governor John E. Baldacci
From: Jean Wilson, Chair, ConnectME Authority
Date: October 8, 2009
Re: **Applications for BIP, BTOP, and BIP/BTOP Grants:
Recommendations and Assessments**

The Broadband Strategy Council (“BBSC”) was created to advise the ConnectME Authority (“Authority”) on all matters pertaining to broadband opportunities available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, as well as advise the University of Maine System with respect to matters pertaining to the lease or sale of excess broadband capacity of the educational broadband service.

The BBSC is made up of two members of the Senate; three members of the House; a representative of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Office of Information Technology; the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development or the commissioner's designee; the chair of the Public Utilities Commission or the chair's designee; the Executive Director of the ConnectME Authority; a representative from the University of Maine System; and a representative from the Maine School and Library Network.

Included with this memo are: recommendations and assessments for the Maine-specific applications; the same for the multi-state applications; and a spreadsheet with two tabs summarizing both. The Maine-specific projects are listed alphabetically, not in any order of preference or priority.

The BBSC met five times since July to craft a review process and to discuss all USDA/RUS and NTIA grant applications that are either Maine-specific or multi-state projects that may pertain to Maine citizens. The BBSC reviewed all the application using five criteria:

1. Proposed projects must be consistent with the BBSC vision.
2. Proposed projects should foster and support economic development.
3. Proposed projects should preserve existing jobs and create new jobs.

4. The BBSC will assess proposed projects in regard to their value.
5. The BBSC will assess proposed projects in regard to their viability.

While the USDA/RUS was not seeking state input for its BIP projects, the BBSC did review those with the NTIA BTOP projects. Of the total of nineteen state-specific projects, the BBSC recommends nine for funding. Four were projects of interest, but did not have enough information to recommend fully, and six were not recommended for funding. The BBSC did not recommend any of the multi-state projects for funding. One was a project of interest that merits more investigation ("Broadband for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing").

The ConnectME Authority met October 8, 2009, to review the recommendations from the BBSC for final submission to the Governor. The Authority received a letter from the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate supporting the BBSC recommendations. It also received a letter from Rep. Seth Berry regarding the Three Ring Binder project. Both letters are included.

The Authority adopts all recommendations from the BBSC, with the recommendation to the Governor that he provide suggestions to the NTIA regarding the protection of public investments because of the high level of public funding for these projects. This is especially relevant for the Three Ring Binder Project which proposes to use approximately 80% public funds.