

Maine to Receive Nearly \$1.8 Million for Broadband Planning & Mapping Project

(Augusta, Maine—January 12, 2010) The Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) today announced a nearly \$1.8 million grant award to the ConnectME Authority to fund a mapping and planning project, creating the first comprehensive geographic inventory of high-speed Internet services statewide for use in identifying unserved and underserved areas and in planning expansion throughout the State. This project is crucial for administering future State public- and private-sector grants for broadband, creating opportunities for broadband service providers, the business community, public institutions, and the citizens of Maine.

The grant funds will facilitate a much more detailed and complete analysis of broadband than would have been possible with only the Authority's modest resources. The grant amount is approximately \$1.3 million for broadband data collection and mapping activities over a two-year period and nearly \$440,000 for broadband planning activities over a five-year period in Maine, bringing the total grant award to nearly \$1.8 million.

"This mapping grant will help us target our resources more effectively. Once we identify where broadband is available, and at what level of service, we can use our limited funds to provide incentives to private businesses to expand services into areas of the State in greatest need," said Governor John Baldacci. "In addition to improving education and the economy through greater broadband deployment, this grant brings additional business to the Maine company that won the contract for the mapping project through a competitive bidding process."

The Authority awarded James W. Sewall Company of Old Town, Maine, a three-year contract to map broadband service and availability for the entire state. The mapping project, funded in part by the ConnectME Authority and the funding under the NTIA State Broadband Grant Program, will extend over three years, with the majority of the mapping to be completed in the first half of 2010.

The ConnectME Authority was established by the State of Maine legislature to stimulate investment in advanced communications technology infrastructure in unserved areas of the State so as to enhance economic development, healthcare, education, tourism, public health and safety, and government efficiency. ConnectME's mapping project brings together a coalition of organizations with a wide breadth of broadband and mapping experience, including the Maine Public Utilities Commission, the Maine Office of GIS, the Broadband Strategy Council, and Sewall. For more information, visit the web site at www.maine.gov/connectme.