



NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Baldacci Announces Creation of Statewide Map to Support Broadband Development

Federal Stimulus Supports State Broadband Mapping Initiative

(Augusta, Maine—13 October 2009) Governor John Baldacci today announced the launch of a project to create 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. The project will lay the foundation for administering future State public- and private-sector grants for broadband, creating unprecedented opportunities for broadband service providers (SPs), the business community, public institutions, and the citizens of Maine. The Governor has tasked the ConnectME Authority to direct the project.

"My Administration and the Maine State Legislature recognize the importance of making broadband services available throughout our entire State," said Governor Baldacci. "Future economic opportunities depend on our ability to have these services affordable and available to all residents of Maine. While many providers have made great strides in most parts of the State, we must seek ways to encourage development in all of our unserved areas."

Following a nationwide search, the ConnectME Authority has awarded James W. Sewall Company of Old Town, Maine, a three-year contract to map broadband service and availability for the entire state. The project, funded in part by the Authority and eligible to receive \$2.6 million in federal stimulus funding under the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (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.

Sewall will bring an innovative sustainable systems approach to the inventory process, integrating service provider (SP) address data and the State's E911 roads data into a State broadband map and geodatabase that can be maintained over time without large additional investment. Once implemented and hosted online, the system will provide a broad user community with web-based access to information and search tools, enabling government officials to identify critical unserved and underserved areas for funding, SPs to determine optimal locations for placing resources, and private citizens to locate SPs in their area.

"The ConnectME Authority views this initiative as a significant step forward in meeting our goal to expand broadband access throughout the entire state, and especially in the most rural, unserved areas of Maine," says Jean Wilson, Chair of the Authority. "Sewall is the logical choice to be our consultant. Sewall understands the broadband challenges the State faces, has the technical abilities needed to meet our requirements, and shares our commitment to advancing broadband as a strategic pillar of economic development. We look forward to working with Governor Baldacci's office, with Sewall, and with other members of the broadband coalition to advance broadband for all Maine's stakeholders."

The ConnectME Authority was established by the State of Maine legislature to stimulate investment in advanced communications technology infrastructure in unserved or underserved areas of the State so as to enhance economic development, healthcare, education, tourism, public health and safety, and government efficiency. ConnectME's current 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.

Founded in 1880, Sewall is an integrated team of geospatial, engineering and natural resource consultants who partner with clients to create practical, sustainable solutions. The company's diverse portfolio is based on 100 years' experience in surveying, forestry consulting, and civil engineering; 60 years' in aerial mapping; and 20 years' in geospatial systems and software. For more information on the Maine broadband mapping project, please contact: Lisa Schoonmaker, Communications Director, at 207-827-4456; schl@sewall.com; and visit the web site at www.sewall.com.

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