



CONNECTMAINE

ConnectMaine Authority Members: Nick Battista, Jasmine Bishop, Fred Britain, Susan Corbett, Heather Johnson, Jeff Letourneau, Liz Wyman

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Press Release: BROADBAND GRANT FROM NTIA FOR MAINE

The ConnectMaine Authority and application partners were successful in applying for \$28 million from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program.

The Department of Commerce awarded a total of 13 grants as part of the Broadband Infrastructure Program, totaling more than \$277 million, to connect more than 133,000 unserved households. The Program, which was funded by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, was designed to support broadband infrastructure deployment in unserved areas, especially rural areas.

“These awards bring us one step closer to closing the digital divide in Maine and across the country,” said Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo.

Broadband service enables civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning and access to essential services. This will expand broadband access to nearly 15,000 Maine subscriber locations, helping make rural communities a more viable place to live, work, and raise a family, expressed by Senator Susan Collins, Senator Angus King, Rep. Chellie Pingree and Rep. Jared Golden.

ConnectMaine started focusing on this opportunity in May 2021 and submitted the application in August. After a request for proposals process, three internet service providers (ISPs) were identified as partners in projects proposed. The projects affect seven different areas of the state. The review process was extensive, but staff and partners remained engaged and hopeful.

“This wouldn't have been possible without the ConnectMaine contractors Tilson Technology and VETRO working on this and working well together,” said Nick Battista, Chair of the ConnectMaine Authority. “The energy, the interest, the clear need in these communities, and the work many of them had done with ISPs along the way helped position these projects to be part of a successful application.”

“Tilson, VETRO, our ISP partners on these projects and the community leaders involved, all helped in creating a highly competitive application and getting it through the review process,” said Peggy Schaffer, ConnectMaine Executive Director.

Three projects will be community-owned: Towns of Isle au Haut, Somerville and Washington; others will occur on the Blue Hill Peninsula, in the Farmington and Rangeley areas, and in Jefferson.

The mission of ConnectMaine is to facilitate the universal availability of broadband to all Maine households and businesses. ConnectMaine website: www.maine.gov/connectme.