

About Us

Goals The Broadband Alliance is an organization that develops education and advocacy programs to make affordable internet broadband available. While we believe that everyone globally should have high speed internet access, our focus initially is on the United States and more specifically Rural America. Our programs will be comprised of research and surveys to determine the current and changing state of connectivity and then educate those in a position to change the situation. As an advocate for broadband, and broadband that makes economic sense, we will provide support for all public and private initiatives to propagate broadband throughout rural America.

Background This organization has been the topic of discussion for a number of years between various members of the Agricultural community. In 2005 a pro-forma Board of Directors was assembled to begin discussions on how together to organize and impact what was viewed as a need that was largely being ignored. Subsequently we have watched public policy develop programs that appear to address the issue but in zealous due diligence place barriers to obtaining the funding provided in the budget. The 2002 Farm Bill allocated \$2.2 billion to the "Access to Broadband" fund. Two years later only \$206.1 million had been approved. Only 91 applications had gone through the tedious application process that intimidated would-be loan applicants. Of these 91 applications, only 16 had been approved. On the heels of the 2007 farm bill, the Broadband Alliance was formally started. Robert Paarlberg, former Managing Director of Information Technology for Royster-Clark, was named the Executive Director and formal discussions and organization issued started being addressed. This initiative is a process and not an event - it will take a lot of effort and continued diligence to bring legislation and policy to the field.

Programs We have two active programs at the present time. The first is to be a spokesman for Broadband in a rural economy. This will involve writing articles for the agricultural press and speaking at agricultural and rural meetings. On our immediate agenda is a series of meetings scheduled in Washington DC right after congress returns. We will be meeting with Senators, Agricultural Associations, and Government Agencies to encourage sensible programs to encourage the broadband expansion initiatives. The second program is to provide training and assistance to those companies that are applying for funding from various federal and state programs. We believe this will be best approached from both sides of the table. Reduce the complexity and bureaucracy of those creating the loan guidelines and procedures and secondly provide guidelines on how to navigate the system for those that are making an application. Obviously these two programs require a committed membership support both with an endorsement and a membership. Please join us so we can bring your voice to affordable rural broadband access.