

## Texas Selects Broadband Alliance

October 14, 2009; Texas Department of Agriculture and Public Utility Commission of Texas today announced that the Broadband Alliance for Agriculture's application to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration was one of 11 Sustainable Adoption projects that were recommended as having a positive impact on the state of Texas. Todd Staples, Commissioner of Agriculture - Texas Department of Agriculture and Donna Nelson, Commissioner - Public Utility Commission of Texas stated that recommended projects "are based upon an extensive review process involving a diverse group of broadband and community experts, which was conducted in a very short period of time. Given our extensive process, we are confident in the projects we have recommended."

Further "We have taken seriously the responsibility of providing recommendations to NTIA. TDA and PUC, in consultation with the Texas Department of Public Safety, developed a rigorous process for reviewing each grant application in an effort to make the best recommendations possible to assist NTIA. Our agencies collected copies of applications from grant applicants, established review teams and relied on NTIA-established criteria, as well as additional state priorities, in developing the following recommendations. We recruited almost 40 persons, who were screened for qualifications and conflicts of interest, to serve on the review teams - three scorers considering the infrastructure applications and teams of two reviewing the public computer center and sustainable adoption applications. As you know, states have faced a monumental task in reviewing a large number of complex BTOP applications in a short time frame. Within four weeks, more than 150 applications that could potentially affect Texas were solicited and received. Proposed projects were screened for the ability to extend broadband service to unserved and underserved populations; the reasonableness of the proposed cost of service; sustainability; the level of service to be provided; and the ability to address the policy goals of BTOP and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. In addition to established NTIA program criteria, Texas prioritizes broadband expansion projects that support deployment in rural and remote areas, public safety connections and geographic diversity. We also included scalability as a criterion, recognizing that it may allow the strongest elements of a project to be funded, thereby achieving maximum deployment."