

Contact: (517) 241-2121

Agency: Labor & Economic Growth

Governor's Rural Broadband Initiative Making Technology More Accessible to Michigan Citizens

September 7, 2006 - The Michigan Broadband Development Authority (MBDA) today announced it has closed on a \$5.6 million loan to SpeedNet, LLC, a mobile broadband service provider based in Saginaw, to bring the state one step closer to universal broadband coverage.

"Access to the latest technology is a critical step to ensuring that our businesses are competitive and our students are prepared for the 21st century economy," said Governor Jennifer M. Granholm. "Today, we are one step closer to our goal of providing access to affordable high-speed internet service to every citizen in Michigan by the end of 2007."

The Governor's Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI) was created to ensure the expansion of high-speed internet access to rural and underserved areas of the state by targeting the funding mechanisms of the MBDA to these areas.

The \$5.6 million loan will help SpeedNet to deploy non-line of sight (NLOS) access points and customer premise equipment throughout the underserved areas of: Bay, Saginaw, Midland, Tuscola, Isabella, Presque Isle, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Kalkaska, Antrim and Emmett counties.

This funding will also assist SpeedNet in acquiring the broadband assets of Cherryland Wireless, an internet service provider located Traverse City. The purchase will allow SpeedNet to build a network footprint that spreads across a significant majority of the northern lower-peninsula bringing potential service to an additional 200,000 households.

"Thank you Governor Granholm and the MBDA, your financial assistance has been vital to the growth and expansion of SpeedNet's service," said John Ogren, President of SpeedNet.

"We are proud to be doing business with SpeedNet," said James W. Butler III, Executive Vice President of the MBDA. "SpeedNet's cutting-edge technology solution has mobile capabilities, which can be highly beneficial to public safety units in these rural areas."

NLOS is a broadband product that allows customers to receive a wireless signal from a transmitting tower without that signal degrading or being interrupted. This technology is advantageous in areas with rugged terrain, where obstacles are between the tower and the customer's modem, like trees. Therefore, it has been found to be a viable solution to providing broadband to rural areas.

The MBDA, an agency in the Department of Labor & Economic Growth, was created to help the state attract more private sector investment in high-speed, Internet infrastructure, and to increase demand for and utilization of broadband services.

Established in 2001 in Saginaw, SpeedNet, LLC has grown to become one of the largest wireless broadband providers in Michigan. The company provides both line-of-sight (LOS) and non-line-of-sight (NLOS) wireless broadband service, using licensed MMDA spectrum.

[Read more Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth press releases.](#)

Copyright © 2006 State of Michigan