

NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE STEPS UP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Submits \$4 Million Federal Stimulus Application for Wireless Broadband Coverage Throughout Ulster County

Kingston, NY (August 26, 2009) Ulster County has submitted an application, through the Federal Broadband Initiatives Program, for a \$4 million dollar grant to help build a high-speed, wireless broadband system that would provide coverage to nearly every un-served and underserved area of the County. High-speed broadband internet service is a fundamental building block to a competitive and sustainable economy, as well as to the residents of Ulster County who live in rural areas and who are unable to fully take advantage of the wealth of information, opportunities and services available online.

County Executive Hein said, "Every business sector in our county, from creative services, to tourism, to consulting, manufacturing and agriculture relies on the ability to communicate effectively across the internet. We exist within a high - performance, global economy and without access to broadband service, we simply cannot be competitive. Additionally, because of our proximity to the New York metropolitan area, we have many people who either telecommute or who run very successful home based businesses. We must do everything we can to support them and all of the residents of our County who are unable to realize the benefits of high-speed connectivity." He added, "This is a competitive grant; however, my team has submitted an outstanding application and I'm optimistic about the results."

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Creation of this application has been a collaborative effort working with Intelligent Information Technology Systems, Inc., Ulster County technical staff, Ulster County Development Corporation as well as Town Supervisors and municipal telecommunications committees.

The County Executive's Office obtained coverage maps of existing fiber providers and then worked with Town Supervisors to ascertain the broadband dark areas of the county. Using the maps prepared by towns and under the direction of the County Executive, Ulster County Information Service's Geographic Information Specialists worked to create broadband maps that included census tract and household population information to determine areas of eligibility under the federal broadband program.

The project, aptly called Ulster County Community Wireless is designed to provide enhanced citizen access, as well as critical economic development and public safety communications infrastructure in rural and less densely populated areas of the County.

The total project cost is estimated to be \$4.8 million dollars. The local match (\$800 thousand) will be provided through a combination of a \$400 thousand match from New York State, a \$100 thousand dollar grant from Ulster County Development Corporation's (UCDC) Telecommunications Loan Fund and \$300 thousand from Community Wireless, a division of Intelligent Information Technology Solutions, Inc., a local Ulster County firm with a proven track record in providing wireless broadband solutions to the public, private and academic sectors.

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The Ulster County Community Wireless project will include service to areas of Rochester, Wawarsing, Denning, Hardenburgh, Woodstock, Shandaken, Shawangunk, Olive and other areas. The project proposal is to use up to 25 wireless masts (smaller than a telephone pole) to provide service to subscribers in un-served areas at competitive rates. In addition, public safety organizations in served areas will receive free coverage and businesses interested in purchasing commercial bandwidth will be able to do so at business competitive rates.

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