



California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Terrie Prosper, 415.703.1366, news@cpuc.ca.gov

PRESS RELEASE

Docket #: Res T-17182

CPUC HELPS BRIDGE DIGITAL DIVIDE THROUGH FUNDING OF SIX BROADBAND PROJECTS IN UNSERVED AREAS

SAN FRANCISCO, November 21, 2008 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today approved funding for six unprotested projects that will bring broadband service for the first time to 1,294 households in unserved areas, helping to bridge the “digital divide” in the state.

The projects, funded from the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF), total \$372,976 and represent 40 percent of the total project costs for broadband infrastructure for the six areas, which are located in Blanchard, Grenada, Hopland, Mount Wilson, Pinyon, and Prattville. The CPUC is still considering other CASF unserved area applications for which protests were filed.

On December 20, 2007, the CPUC established the two-year CASF to provide 40 percent matching infrastructure grants to broadband providers willing to serve the nearly 2,000 California communities that are currently unserved and underserved by broadband.

“Broadband is a critical infrastructure like utility poles and roads,” commented CPUC Commissioner Rachelle Chong, a member of the state’s Broadband Task Force. “By granting these first applications, with many more to come, the CPUC hopes to bring every Californian the opportunity to connect to the Internet. By doing so, we give that person the opportunity to buy things on the Internet, start an online business, engage in tele-education, or take advantage of government and other services online.”

AT&T, which serves Blanchard, Grenada, Hopland, and Mount Wilson, plans to offer high-speed, stand alone, Internet access service, where technically feasible, using existing DSL technology and where it has wireline facilities. These projects will serve a total of 741 households that were



previously without broadband access. Verizon will bring broadband to Pinyon using the backhaul from existing broadband service in Palm Springs to bring service to 382 households. Frontier will deploy broadband to Prattville to serve 171 customers previously unserved.

The six applications approved today are the first to be approved among the 23 applications received for CASF funding for unserved areas. The remaining applications will be considered in 2009.

For more information the Governor's Broadband Taskforce, please visit www.calink.ca.gov/pdf/CBTF_FINAL_Report.pdf.

For more information on communications issues, please visit www.CalPhoneInfo.com.

For more information on the CPUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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