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MEDIA ADVISORY

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**CPUC CONTINUES TO HELP BRIDGE DIGITAL DIVIDE
WITH APPROVAL OF BROADBAND PROJECTS
IN UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED COUNTIES**

SAN FRANCISCO, March 12, 2009 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today approved funding for nine projects that will improve or bring high-speed Internet broadband service to 1,262 households in five counties that are currently underserved or have no service.

The projects, funded from the CPUC's California Advanced Services Fund (CASF), total \$728,093 and represent 40 percent of the total project costs for broadband infrastructure for nine areas. Two of the projects will bring broadband service for the first time to an estimated 800 households in the unserved communities of Covelo and Laytonville in Mendocino County. Seven of the projects will bring faster speed broadband service to an estimated 462 households in Birds Landing (Solano County), Easton (Fresno County), Irwin (Merced County), Livingston (Merced County), Lodi (San Joaquin County), Los Banos (Merced County), and Oakdale (San Joaquin County).

These projects are the third group of applications to be approved by the CPUC to help bridge the digital divide in the state. Underserved areas are areas where broadband is available but no facilities-based provider offers service at speeds of at least 3 Mega Bits per Second (Mbps) download and 1 Mbps upload.

"I'm pleased to see our first underserved applications be granted, showing California's commitment to digital inclusion for all our citizens," said CPUC Commissioner Rachelle Chong, a member of the state's Broadband Task Force. "Our state goal is to bring world-class

broadband speeds to areas where the speeds are slow so that Web 2.0 applications can be easily accessed.”

The Covelo and Laytonville Projects by Willits Online LLC, will deploy ADSL2+ based broadband service to households with existing wireline telephone service covering an area of approximately seven square miles. The unserved communities of Covelo and Laytonville will receive high-speed Internet broadband service for the first time. Willits Online’s matching grant is for \$108,000.

Of the seven underserved projects, AT&T’s five projects will provide high-speed, stand-alone Internet access service powered by Internet Protocol while Citizen’s two projects will extend high-speed Internet service through the expansion of DSL deployment. These broadband Internet projects will allow customers to access information and expand educational and economic opportunities.

Following is a list of the nine projects approved today:

Name of Telephone Corporation	Project Name	CASF Funding (40%)
Willits Online LLC	Covelo	\$54,000
Willits Online LLC	Laytonville	\$54,000
AT&T	Lodi	\$137,416
AT&T	Oakdale	\$108,783
AT&T	Irwin	\$41,411
AT&T	Los Banos	\$120,170
AT&T	Easton	\$49,869
Citizens (Frontier)	Birds Landing	\$100,444
Citizens (Global Valley)	Livingston	\$62,000
TOTAL		\$728,093

On December 20, 2007 the CPUC established the two-year, \$100 million CASF to provide 40 percent matching infrastructure grants to broadband providers willing to put up the matching 60

percent of funds and to serve the nearly 2,000 California communities that are currently unserved and underserved by broadband.

Of that \$100 million, \$9,148,621 in broadband infrastructure grants have been approved so far. Applications from broadband providers are still being accepted for both unserved and underserved areas.

For more information the Governor's Broadband Taskforce, please visit www.calink.ca.gov/taskforce/aboutus.asp.

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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