

# USDA funds rural broadband expansion

**S**T. LOUIS — The USDA recently announced funding for 28 telephone utilities to build, expand and improve broadband in their rural service territories.

The announcement was made by Jessica Zufolo, USDA Rural Utilities Service deputy administrator, during an address at the annual meeting of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners here.

“TODAY’S FUNDING will provide residents of these rural communities with high-speed internet connections to improve healthcare and educational opportunities and connect to global markets,” USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a news release.

“In addition to providing

much needed services to rural businesses and residents, these investments will increase jobs, not just in the near term, but through expanded opportunities in rural areas.”

Awardees in the region include:

## Iowa

Mediapolis Telephone Co. — \$13.4 million in loan funds will be used to make system upgrades to the transport system and the network architecture from the existing copper digital subscriber lines (DSL) to FTTP broadband systems.

Griswold Cooperative Telephone Co. — \$12.7 million in loan funds will be used to complete a system-wide FTTP network, enhancing broadband service to all subscribers.

La Porte City Telephone Co. — \$9.8 million in loan funds will be used to make system improvements, including installation of a FTTP broadband network that will serve all of the borrower’s subscribers. A total of 297 miles of buried fiber optic cable will be deployed, enabling downstream data rates of up to 20 Mbps.

## Illinois

McNabb Telephone Co. — \$3.7 million in loan funds will be used to make system improvements, including constructing new FTTP facilities. A total of 115 miles of buried fiber optic cable will be deployed to improve service to subscribers.

Shawnee Telephone Co. — \$30.28 million in loan funds

will be used to construct FTTP facilities, allowing Shawnee to provide voice and data services at speeds of up to 100 Mbps to both residences and businesses.

McDonough Telephone Cooperative Inc. — \$15.72 million in funds will be used to upgrade the rural areas with FTTH technology. About 766 miles of buried fiber cable will be deployed to provide over half of the subscribers with access to improved broadband service.

Wabash Telephone Cooperative Inc. — \$21.8 million will be used to install 777 miles of buried fiber optic cables and related equipment throughout the proposed FTTP system. The FTTP system will enhance service to 70 percent of Wabash’s subscribers.

# Publication helps farmers evaluate energy savings

AMES — Evaluating the energy savings of new equipment for the farm can be challenging.

A new publication from Iowa State University Extension gives examples for comparing the payback periods of energy-related purchases.

“ESTIMATING PAYBACK for energy efficiency,” (PM 2089S), is available to download from the Extension Online Store, <https://store.extension.iastate.edu>.

“Some energy-saving investments cost more initially,” Mark Hanna, ISU Extension ag

engineer, said in a news release.

“Saving money today by purchasing equipment with a lower initial cost — and higher energy demands — puts the buyer at risk when energy prices rise in the future.”

This publication addresses the concepts of initial cost, useful life and energy savings for different types of farm expenses. Examples include a lighting project, replacing an electric motor and upgrading a farm truck.

Using simple payback calculations, these examples estimate the time it would take for energy

**“Saving money today by purchasing equipment with a lower initial cost — and higher energy demands — puts the buyer at risk when energy prices rise in the future.”**

**Mark Hanna  
ISU Extension**

savings to equal initial cost.

“During harvest, volatility in the markets may have overshadowed the fact that this year’s fuel prices are the highest we’ve seen since 2008,” said Dana Petersen, ISU Extension program coordinator with ISU Farm Energy.

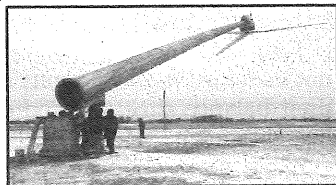
“It is critical to consider energy costs in your plans before you start a project or make a significant purchase for your operation.”

FOR MORE tips on energy efficiency around the farmstead, visit <http://farmenergy.exnet.iastate.edu> or follow

@ISU\_Farm\_Energy on Twitter.

The Farm Energy publications are part of a series of farm energy conservation and efficiency educational materials being developed through the ISU Farm Energy Initiative. The purpose is to increase farmers’ awareness of opportunities for improving efficient use of farm energy.

The initiative also will help farmers and utility providers to explore alternatives to reduce farm energy demand and to improve overall profitability in a rapidly changing energy environment.



Hydraulic Towers Raise & Lower Wind Turbines for Easy Maintenance



**HARNESS NATURE™**  
Your Source for Renewable Energy

## 2011 Year End Wind Turbine Sale!

Plus last chance for **30%**  
1603 U.S. Treasury Cash Grant  
in lieu of Tax Credit\*

Numerous Other Incentives  
for Farms & Business

CALL US TOLL FREE  
**877-414-4646**

for a FREE Assessment & Estimate  
or visit us at [www.HarnessNature.com](http://www.HarnessNature.com)

\*Orders must be placed by December 28, 2011 - Call us for details