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**Heller Welcomes Announcement that Lincoln County Will Receive $6,944,000 to Improve Broadband Services**

**WASHINGTON –** U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV), a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and advocate for rural broadband expansion, welcomed the announcement from U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue that $6,944,000 will be directed to Lincoln County Telephone System, Inc. and invested in Lincoln County to help maintain and expand its broadband services. Nevada is one of 11 states and Lincoln County Telephone System is just one of 12 projected selected by the USDA as recipients of funding to improve broadband infrastructure around the country.

The funding is made available through the [Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program](https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/telecommunications-infrastructure-loans-loan-guarantees), and it will be used to expand fixed-wireless broadband system as well as establish and upgrade a fiber-to-the-premises (FTTP) network in Lincoln County, Nevada. The resources will also go toward advancing segments of legacy copper network, ultimately making improvements that serve 2,038 access lines.

“One of my top priorities in the United States Senate is working to make sure that small businesses and students in all corners of Nevada have the tools – such as access to high-speed Internet - to be successful. That is why I welcome the announcement that Lincoln County will receive $6,944,000 in funding to strengthen and expand access to high-speed Internet services,” **said Heller.** “I thank Secretary Perdue for recognizing Nevada’s need and investing in rural Nevada with the goal of increasing economic and educational opportunities. I look forward to continue working to find solutions that empower our rural workforce, encourage innovation, and ensure all Nevadans have the chance to get ahead.”

Since coming to the Congress, Heller has advocated for policies that encourage rural broadband investment. In June 2017, [Heller introduced bipartisan legislation that would expand rural Americans’ access to broadband by streamlining the inefficient and inconsistent application process required to construct broadband infrastructure on federal lands](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/6/heller-manchin-introduce-bill-to-expand-access-to-rural-broadband). Specifically, the legislation implements a 270-day clock for the Department of Interior (DOI) and US Forest Service (USFS) to respond to applications. If the federal agencies miss the deadline, the application is deemed approved and if the application is denied, the agency must notify the applicant of the reason for denial. It also requires the federal agencies to establish regulations within one year that reflect a streamlined, consistent, and standardized process for application review.

“A person’s location should not determine whether he or she has access to modern communications infrastructure,” **Secretary Perdue said.** “That is why USDA is partnering with businesses and communities by investing in state-of-the-art broadband e-connectivity to remote and rural areas. These investments will expand access to educational, social and business opportunities for 22,000 subscribers to help grow their rural communities and America’s economy.”

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