

USDA Officials Attend Groundbreaking to Expand High-Speed Internet Access in Rural Texas

Italy, Texas, March 7,

2024 – Today, the United States

Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development

Administrator of the

Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Andy Berke alongside State Director Salerno visited the city of Italy, Texas to celebrate the groundbreaking on a \$4.8 million investment for Legacy ISP. The internet service provider to deliver high-speed internet service for rural Texans, connecting 24,306 people, 1,064 businesses, 73 educational facilities, and 40 farms to high-speed internet in Ellis and Hill counties.

Legacy partners began the ceremony by thanking USDA for being present and for allowing the company to develop more internet infrastructure for their growing number of rural users.

“We are really glad to be here, responded Berke. Thank you to Legacy for being our partners in this, thank you Mayor Cockran, and thank you to the city’s leadership. President Biden’s goal is to make sure every American has access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet; this is something he really cares about.

Since its inception, Legacy has been dedicated to offering a fast and reliable broadband solution to its local communities where internet service has long

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been poor to non-existent. Today's project begins the construction of a 100 percent fiber-to-the-premises network to deliver much needed broadband speeds up to 1 Gbps.

“Texas has almost 5 million rural residents who all deserve high quality internet, said Salerno. We have towns in Texas that have no internet and the towns suffer- the kids in these communities fall behind because of lack of internet connection. Legacy ISP will deploy the technology with the high-speed internet access communities need to thrive in an increasingly digital world.”

Today's groundbreaking is a part of 197 ReConnect project investments by the Biden-Harris administration. The investments will bring high-speed internet access to approximately 500,000 people in rural America. Under the current administration, this is USDA's largest effort aimed at filling gaps in high-speed internet in unserved and underserved rural areas to date.

Background: ReConnect Loan and Grant Program

To be eligible for [ReConnect Program \(https://www.usda.gov/reconnect\)](https://www.usda.gov/reconnect) funding, an applicant must serve an area that lacks access to service at speeds of 100 megabits per second (Mbps) (download) and 20 Mbps (upload). The applicant must also commit to building facilities capable of providing high-speed internet service with speeds of 100 Mbps (download and upload) to every location in its proposed service area.

Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, tribal and high-poverty areas. For more information, [visit www.rd.usda.gov \(http://www.rd.usda.gov/\)](http://www.rd.usda.gov/).

Contact USDA Rural Development

Information on programs available through USDA Rural Development in Texas is available by visiting www.rd.usda.gov/tx (<https://www.rd.usda.gov/tx>), by calling (254) 742-9700, or by following [@RD_Texas on X \(https://twitter.com/rd_texas\)](https://twitter.com/rd_texas) (formerly Twitter).

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