

Duckworth, Durbin Announce \$12.8 Million to Expand Broadband Access in Southern Illinois

December 5 2019 2:48 PM



WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has invested \$12.8 million in high-speed broadband service in Southern Illinois. As part of the [USDA's ReConnect Pilot Program](#), the investment will create or improve e-Connectivity for more than 1,650 homes in Jefferson and Wayne counties.

"Without reliable access to broadband internet, rural communities can't fully access the tools and resources they need to succeed; communities are less able to attract businesses or high-quality employees considering relocating; and children can't complete their homework," Durbin said. "This funding is an investment in the effort to close the digital divide by increasing broadband availability in Illinois."

“Dependable high-speed internet helps students, families and small businesses succeed in today’s economy,” Duckworth said. “This funding will go a long way toward expanding access in southern Illinois, and I’ll keep working with Senator Durbin to ensure all Illinoisans across the state have access to resources that can help them reach their goals.”

Wabash Telephone Cooperative, Inc. will use the \$12.8 million 50 percent loan-grant combination to deploy 298 miles of fiber-optic cable in unserved areas of Jefferson and Wayne counties in Illinois. This investment is anticipated to reach 1,684 households, 31 farms, 29 businesses, nine educational facilities, two critical community facilities, and one health care center.