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Iowa nets federal grants

Money to go toward
broadband projects

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The Iowa Communications Network and six other Iowa groups will share \$90.1 million to be used for broadband projects that create more than 450 jobs upfront and "help drive economic development," the White House announced Friday.

The projects are among 66 Recovery Act broadband projects that, according to the recipients, will create about 5,000 jobs upfront, and also will help spur economic development in some of the nation's hardest-hit communities, perhaps helping to create jobs for years to come.

President Barack Obama announced the

\$795 million in grants through the departments of Commerce and Agriculture to more than 685,000 businesses, 900 health care facilities and 2,400 schools. The grants and loans have been matched by more than \$200 million in outside investment, for a total public-private investment of more than \$1 billion.

The state's ICN is scheduled to get a \$16.2 million grant, with an additional \$7.6 million applicant-provided match, to upgrade an existing 3,000-mile network.

The ICN projects 100 new jobs upfront.

Iowa Health System, which includes St. Luke's Hospital in Cedar Rapids, will receive a \$17.7 million grant with an additional \$9.9 million applicant-provided match to upgrade its existing

fiber network.

Iowa Health System's project stands to benefit about 1.7 million people.

Iowa Health System estimates that the project will directly create about 100 jobs upfront.

Rep. Bruce Braley, D-Waterloo, called the grants a timely "investment in Iowa's future."

"Providing much-needed Internet access to rural communities in Iowa will create hundreds of jobs and spur economic development," he said.

"As Iowans continue to recover from a historic economic disaster, it's important we provide schools, businesses and homes with the tools they need to succeed in an ever-changing global marketplace."

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