

MEMBER COMMUNICATION

ALERT N°: 08/029

To the attention of the Clerk and Council
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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
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Rural Connections Broadband Program Announced

Issue:

The Government of Ontario has announced the launch of its new *Rural Connections Broadband Program*, a \$30 million, four-year program for municipalities in rural southern Ontario to reduce broadband access gaps.

Background:

The *Rural Connections Broadband Program* will provide \$30 million over four years to rural municipalities in southern Ontario to address broadband access gaps in this part of the province.

Rural municipalities in southern Ontario that meet the eligibility requirements can apply for provincial funding individually – or jointly with other municipalities through one lead applicant – for up to one-third of eligible projects costs to a maximum of \$1 million per application. Municipalities are responsible for securing the remaining share of the eligible costs from their own resources and/or from partner contributions. Partners may include business and technology associations, telecommunications service providers, and a variety of other stakeholders.

Rural Connections is a competitive program that will be based on the readiness and commitment of the applicant in addition to connectivity gaps and anticipated benefits to the community. The first application intake deadline is September 18th, 2008. Two intakes per year are planned in future years, until all funds are fully allocated. Should an application not be successful in the first attempt, municipalities may submit an improved application in a future intake.

Application requirements, guidelines and required forms are available from the [Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs \(OMAFRA\) website](#).

This program continues the type of funding available under last year's *Rural Connections... The Ontario Municipal Rural Broadband Partnership Program*, the one-time \$10 million investment for 2007/08 also geared to rural communities in southern Ontario. This new program funding stems from the 2008 Provincial Budget announcement which committed an additional \$30 million over four years for further investment in broadband infrastructure. AMO has been concerned about the longstanding gap in broadband service experienced by rural communities across Ontario and called for additional broadband funding in its [2008 Pre-Budget Submission](#). AMO will continue to advocate for broadband funding for under-serviced communities in Ontario.

Action: For your information.

This information is available in the Policy Issues section of the AMO website at www.amo.on.ca.