Background

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) provides quarterly statutory reports to Congress on the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). This report covers activities from October 1 to December 31, 2018. Previous reports are available on our website at www2.ntia.doc.gov.

Program Progress

In 2010, NTIA invested $4 billion in 233 BTOP projects. As of September 30, 2018, only two BTOP infrastructure projects remained in active status: Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System Authority (LA-RICS) and the Executive Office of the State of Mississippi (Mississippi). All remaining projects completed their project activities.

Monitoring and Grants Administration

NTIA continues to protect taxpayer investments by proactively engaging with these grant recipients to monitor project activities and grant compliance. Each quarter, the active BTOP recipients also report their financial and project performance. NTIA analyzes these reports closely to monitor progress and compliance. NTIA continues to work to finalize the Commerce Department's Office of Inspector General recommendations for LA-RICS and West Virginia.

LA-RICS Update

✦ **Network operations** –LA RICS, in conjunction with FirstNet and AT&T, continues to transition the existing Long-Term Evolution (LTE) system to the National Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN). LA-RICS expects to complete the entire effort by the end of June.

✦ **Planning** – LA RICS submitted information to NTIA for 15 of the 26 new LTE sites being deployed as part of its second phase of deployment. LA-RICS has begun the biological and cultural approval process by various Federal and State agencies. In addition, LA RICS and AT&T are discussing possible solutions regarding the use of Cells on Light Trucks in the NPSBN, which recently included detailed demonstrations of possible solutions.

Mississippi Update

✦ **Procurement** – The University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) awarded a contract for the construction of the Public Safety Communications Center, which will be located on its Jackson campus. This quarter, UMMC also began additional procurements for tools and training resources for the Public Safety Communications Center.

✦ **Equipment installations** – Mississippi's primary vendor for the expansion of the state-wide microwave system completed its final testing of the wireless, network enhancements. Next quarter, Mississippi expects to accept these wireless upgrades, which add nearly 370 miles of new, communication infrastructure primarily serving the public safety community.

Broadband Economic Impacts
Find out about the economic and social impacts of the $4 billion BTOP program: BTOP Economic and Social Impact Study http://go.usa.gov/3fTb4.

How can NTIA help now?
NTIA's BroadbandUSA program promotes innovation and economic growth by supporting efforts to expand broadband connectivity and meaningful use for all Americans. BroadbandUSA works with stakeholders from local and state government, federal agencies, non-profits and industry to:

✦ *Educate*: Arm stakeholders and broadband leaders with **solution-neutral guides** and **tools** that help them make the right decisions for their broadband initiatives.

✦ *Convene:* Lead regional workshops and events to **advance the conversation** and **share lessons learned** regarding broadband connectivity and digital inclusion.

✦ *Assist*: Provide **technical assistance** to communities and partners seeking **neutral advice** and support for their broadband projects.

Contact Information
Please contact Aimee Meacham at ameacham@ntia.doc.gov if you would like us to help someone in your state with technical assistance or discuss other ways BroadbandUSA can help.

Next Report
The next quarterly report to Congress will cover January 1, 2019, to March 30, 2019.

Drawdowns
BTOP projects have drawn down roughly **98 percent** of award dollars, totaling $3.719 billion.

Connection
63 percent of Seniors (aged 65 and older) now use the Internet, an increase of 9 percent, compared with 56 percent in 2015. (CPS Computer and Internet Use Supplement, 2017)

Telemedicine
Expanded access to broadband will allow households in rural Indiana to **reduce health care costs** through telemedicine, in the range of **$2.97 to $4.09 saved for every $1 spent**. (Estimation of the Net Benefits of Indiana Statewide Adoption of Rural Broadband, 2018)