

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGULATORY UTILITY COMMISSIONERS

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NARUC Congratulates USDA's Rural Utilities Service on its 60th Anniversary

WASHINGTON-The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners today congratulated the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) on 60 years of service to America.

"On behalf of NARUC, I want to applaud the dedicated staff of RUS, past and present, on the 60th anniversary of its telecommunications loan program," said NARUC President Frederick Butler of New Jersey.

In 1949, the mission of the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), RUS's predecessor, was expanded to include telephone service. As a direct result of the low-interest loan program many of the telecommunications companies and cooperatives that serve rural America were created to provide service to previously un-served communities.

In 1994, the REA was rolled into the newly created RUS. As communications technology has evolved so to has the RUS program. In recent years, RUS has expanded the program to include the latest communications technology with its Broadband Loan Program, Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program, and Community Connect Grant Program.

"RUS has played a vital role in ensuring that rural Americans have access to reliable, high quality and cutting edge communications technologies," Butler said. "As we move into the broadband world NARUC envisions RUS continuing to play a key role in bringing advanced telecommunications services to rural and insular parts of America."

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NARUC is a non-profit organization founded in 1889 whose members include the governmental agencies that are engaged in the regulation of utilities and carriers in the fifty States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. NARUC's member agencies regulate telecommunications, energy, and water utilities. NARUC represents the interests of State public utility commissions before the three branches of the Federal government.

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