

The Active Consumer

High-Tech Connections For Rural America

(NAPSA)—Folks across rural America are increasingly gaining access to the latest in advanced telecommunications services from a local provider they know and trust—their local electric and telephone utilities.

And the investments being made by electric and telephone utilities are helping rural America bridge the digital divide.

According to a 2006 study by the Economic Policy Institute, 40 percent of rural homes had no Internet access—and only 13 percent of those had high-speed Internet access. The remaining 47 percent got on the Internet through a dial-up connection, which is considerably slower than broadband. Dial-up Internet access is too slow to take advantage of many of the “cool” things the Web has to offer, such as gaming and graphic-intensive sites.

Thanks to efforts by electric and telephone utilities, this situation is changing. Internet services, satellite broadband, consumer wireless and a full menu of high-quality television services—often bundled into one bill—are increasingly being made available in rural communities. In some areas, rural customers will soon receive IPTV—digital television delivered over a broadband network.

The efforts of local electric and



You can find the latest in telecom from your local utility.

telephone utilities make it not only possible but affordable for people and businesses in rural areas to compete economically with less remote areas of the country where there already is established access to high-speed Internet and communications technology.

Additionally, because electric and telephone utilities are local businesses, the money they generate stays in the community and customers receive more personalized service.

That's good news for consumers who prefer that a person—rather than a recording—answer their call when they dial the phone company.

For more information about services that may be available in your community, please call your local electric or telephone utility.