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DC Access Participates in Public Meetings About Broadband Stimulus Programs

Washington, DC – The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides \$7.2 billion in federal dollars for broadband services. In the wake of this unprecedented commitment of federal funding for broadband, DC Access, a Wireless Internet Service Provider (WISP) that provides WiFi to hundreds of individuals and businesses in the District of Columbia, has seized the opportunity to participate in public meetings that are shaping where and how stimulus dollars will be distributed.

Since the Recovery Act was signed into law on February 17, Martha Huizenga, partner at DC Access, has attended a series of public meetings held by National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Rural Development, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Huizenga is participating in these meetings as part of her work on the Legislative Committee of the Wireless Internet Service Providers Association (WISPA), a national organization dedicated to promoting and improving the Wireless ISP industry. In 2007, Huizenga served on WISPA's Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act (CALEA) Committee, which worked with the FBI to develop standards for Wireless providers to comply with CALEA.

"Because we are a DC-based business, we are in a unique position to represent the interests of WISPs across the nation," Huizenga says. "At the same time, as a small, locally owned business, we want to stay informed and look for ways to bring stimulus dollars to the community where we live and work."

The Recovery Act provides \$7.2 billion to fund broadband development. Of this total, \$2.5 was appropriated for the Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Services, to be distributed as grants and loans for rural broadband development, and \$4.7 billion was appropriated to establish a Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) through NTIA at the U.S. Department of Commerce. BTOP will award dollars to eligible entities to develop and expand broadband services to unserved and underserved areas and improve access to broadband by public safety agencies. More information about BTOP is available at <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants/>.

Key topics at the public meetings have included defining basic terms, such as what qualifies as broadband; identifying unserved and underserved populations; how to reach vulnerable populations; innovative programs to encourage sustainable adoption of broadband; how to expand public computer center capacity; private sector eligibility for stimulus dollars; and the role of strategic institutions.

ABOUT DC ACCESS, LLC

2009 marks the 10th anniversary of DC Access, which is owned and operated by the husband-and-wife team of Matt Wade and Martha Huizenga. DC Access, which privately held and headquartered on Capitol Hill, is DC's first and only Wireless Internet Service Provider (WISP). DC Access also provides nationwide web hosting and nationwide dial-up. To learn more, visit www.dcaccess.net.

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