

Senator Warner hosts Virginia Summit on Broadband Access

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On Monday, July 27 Virginia Senator Mark Warner hosted a **half-day summit** for any interested individual or groups to review the **Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP)/Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP)** ARRA funding opportunities.

As the August 14 deadline for applications in the first of three rounds of funding fast approaches, the primary goals of the summit were to connect state and local government stakeholders with federal executives from the Department of Commerce and the Department of Agriculture in charge of the BTOP/BIP funding programs, to connect potential private and public sector partners, and to provide supplemental information and proposal support for Commonwealth proposers.

Panel members included **David Villano, Assistant Administrator, Telecommunications Programs, Rural Utility Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture**, **Larry Strickling, Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information, U.S. Department of Commerce**, and **Karen Jackson, Deputy Secretary of Technology, Virginia Information Technologies Agency**.

Beyond workshops and summits such as this one, guidance can be found in a number of places. GovWin's Chris Dixon recently delivered a webinar on **State and Local Stimulus Guide: Broadband**. GovWin's Economic Stimulus product also has an **initiative report on BTOP**. Senator Warner is also maintaining a site for the **Broadband Summit** with the presentations from the event and additional resources. And of course, the Department of Commerce is maintaining the **Broadband USA** site as a portal for information around the BTOP/BOP programs.

The packed auditorium at Piedmont Virginia Community College had an audience of predominantly local public officials from the Commonwealth seeking clarification and guidance on how to tap stimulus funding. Deadlines, definitions and documentation still have governments nervous about the likelihood of submitting a winning proposal. Vendors who can establish public sector partners and assist in the proposal process will have the most success in seeing the BTOP/BOP funding stream. And remember, round two of this program is expected to begin in late 2009 and round three will happen in 2010.