

U.S. Cellular adds rural towers

*Universal Service Fund Helps
Connect Maine's Rural
Communities; FCC Proposals
Compromise Economic
Development, Public Safety*

U.S. Cellular recently completed construction of additional cell sites in Frenchville and Monticello to improve call quality for its customers. The Frenchville site will increase U.S. Cellular's coverage and network capacity in the town of Frenchville and provide service along Routes 1 and 162. The Monticello site will bring added coverage and network capacity to Monticello and along Route 1. The new sites complement U.S. Cellular's statewide network of more than 250 towers.

The new towers are part of a \$16 million network investment in the region in 2008 and were built by U.S. Cellular with support from the federal Universal Service Fund (USF), a critical resource for rural America that faces the threat of drastic cuts at the hands of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). These cuts would diminish USF support for rural wireless and jeopardize public safety and economic development in smaller communities across the state and

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"This part of Maine lacked quality wireless service. As a result, we identified these communities as a priority for the support the company receives through the Universal Service

Fund," said John E. Rooney, president and CEO of U.S. Cellular. "We know there are many more communities like Frenchville and Monticello that deserve reliable wireless service, but it will be nearly impossible to help these folks without support from the USF."

The FCC has been considering various proposals for cutting the portion of the USF used to support the construction and expansion of cell phone and wireless communication technology in rural areas but recently opted to delay a vote on the issue originally scheduled for Election Day, Nov. 4.

At stake is the \$13 million currently made available for wireless in the state of Maine, which would be used to construct as many as 43 new cell phone towers per year in rural communities.

In rural Maine, as in other parts of rural America, first responders like firefighters and police officers depend on wireless service to respond quickly to emergency situations. Nationwide, nearly 300,000 emergency 9-1-1 calls are placed via cell phones every day.

"We need reliable wireless service to protect the health and security of our citizens and to help public safety officials do their jobs," said Sheriff James Madore, Aroostook County Sheriff's Office. "It's a big help to us when companies like U.S. Cellular expand their networks into communities that otherwise would not receive much-needed wireless coverage."

U.S. Cellular, through its work with the Connecting Rural America coalition (www.connectingruralamerica.org), has urged the FCC to preserve federal support for rural wireless development and to take no new action during this time of presidential and congressional transition.

The 8,700 associates of U.S. Cellular believe a wireless phone enhances people's lives and a wireless company should be in the business of bringing people together. U.S. Cellular offers a wide range of plans to meet cus-

tomers needs including unlimited national plans, plans with unlimited incoming calls and prepaid plan options. Phones such as the BlackBerry® Pearl and Curve and the touch screen Samsung Dclve offer e-mail, Web browsing and many features customers are looking for. Based in Chicago, U.S. Cellular is the nation's sixth-largest wireless carrier, serving 6.2 million customers across the country. To learn more about the company, visit one of its retail stores or uscellular.com.

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