

For Immediate Release:
June 16, 2010

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**COMMISSIONER STAPLES RELEASES STATEWIDE MAP TO IDENTIFY
BROADBAND NEEDS ACROSS TEXAS**

Map, survey findings identify areas of the state that remain unconnected

AUSTIN — More than 96 percent of Texas households have access to home broadband service; however, a quarter of a million households in the Lone Star State — more than all of the households in Vermont — lack access to this critical service. In an effort to close the digital divide, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples today announced the launch of the Texas broadband map, which illustrates the state's broadband landscape; pinpoints unserved areas; identifies types of service; and allows broadband service providers to target future investment.

"High-speed Internet is directly related to business development and is a critical lifeline to vital services like telemedicine and education," Commissioner Staples said. "Every Texan should have the opportunity to drive in the fast lane on the information superhighway; however, some Texans are stuck on a dirt road. This new statewide broadband map will help us bridge the digital divide for rural communities and households that remain unserved by broadband service."

The state was mapped by [Connected Texas](#), a non-profit organization designated by the Texas Department of Agriculture to measure and map the availability and use of broadband in Texas.

The map includes data from 123 state providers and indicates 3.5 percent of Texas households, or approximately 257,000 residences, do not have access to home broadband service. Most of the unserved areas are in rural regions of the state, and a lack of broadband access is hindering their opportunities for business development and access to telemedicine, higher education and e-government.

"The complete picture of the state's broadband coverage will help us focus our efforts on those libraries where better connectivity is needed," said Director Peggy Rudd of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. "Public libraries often face the challenge of not knowing what broadband options are available in their areas, and the new map will become a valuable informational tool for them as well."

"This map will be a valuable tool to help Texans identify providers offering high-speed Internet access to homes and businesses throughout the state," said Commissioner Donna L. Nelson of the Public Utility Commission (PUC).

The map is a tool for strategically targeting broadband infrastructure build-out and subscribership. The public is encouraged to review the map at www.connectedtx.org and provide input to help validate the data. The broadband inventory map will be updated again in the fall after consumer and provider data are collected.

The Texas broadband map includes BroadbandStat Technology, which allows a street-level view of current high-speed Internet availability. The map, which will be continually enhanced and

upgraded, is searchable by address, allowing users to see the type of technology used to provide service in their areas, as well as the providers servicing their areas. The public can also use the map to compare prices through direct links to service providers.

Gov. Rick Perry designated TDA, in consultation with the PUC and the Texas Public Safety Commission, to lead the state's broadband service expansion initiatives and represent the interests of Texas to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

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All TDA press releases are also available via the Internet at www.TexasAgriculture.gov/newsroom.