

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ACTEM RECEIVES \$373,823 RUS GRANT WITH ASSISTANCE OF UMS

KENNEBUNKPORT—The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture announced ACTEM has been awarded a Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant of \$373,823.

The USDA selected 105 grant recipients representing both education and medical services in 41 states to receive \$28.2 million. Maine received five of the 58 grants aimed at improving educational opportunities to students in rural communities. The newly organized RSU 1 (Bath area), Rangeley Lakes Regional School, SAD 52 (Turner), SAD 19 (Lubec), and ACTEM grants will bring nearly two million dollars in federal funds to the state.

The purpose of the ACTEM RUS (Rural Utility Service) grant is to provide schools and the University of Maine System access to video conferencing infrastructure equipment to facilitate improved video communication between K-12 schools and the University of Maine System. In addition to providing advanced features to schools already utilizing either Tandberg or Polycom IP video conferencing equipment, the grant intends to facilitate better connections between existing ATM network and IP-based video sites.

Jeff Letourneau, Associate Director of Communications and Network Services for UMS, will play a key role in grant implementation. *“The video conferencing equipment funded by the USDA RUS grant award, along with the Maine Research and Education Network (MaineREN), will provide critical cyber-infrastructure necessary to bring more interactive, high-tech learning opportunities and professional development to the students and teachers of Maine,”* Jeff commented via email, *“ACTEM should be commended for the leadership role it played in bringing these funds into the state.”*

At the January 2008 business meeting, then ACTEM President Vince Vanier of Madawaska proposed the association pursue the RUS grant opportunity.

For ACTEM the grant represents another in a string of partnerships with the University of Maine System. *“We are pleased to have the opportunity to work with ACTEM to help*

Maine educators bring new opportunities for enhanced learning into their classrooms,” said Letourneau.

At the September 15 business meeting current President Crystal Priest noted that 112 schools are listed in the ACTEM RUS grant. Data needs to be collected from every listed institution. *“Realistically it will be 2009 before we start seeing equipment show up,”* Priest remarked.

About ACTEM

ACTEM, the Association of Technology Educators of Maine, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization dedicated to the advancement of education in Maine through the use of technology. For more information visit www.actem.org.

University of Maine System

Established in 1968, the University of Maine System is the state’s largest educational enterprise. It has an annual enrollment of more than 45,000 students and serves over 500,000 individuals annually through educational and cultural offerings. The University of Maine System features seven universities – some with multiple campuses – located across the state, as well as 10 University College outreach centers, a law school, and an additional 75 interactive distance learning sites. For more information, visit www.maine.edu.

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