

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009

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SENATE BILL 697

Short Title: e-NC Authority Connectivity/Econ. Dev. Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Rand; Berger of Franklin and Vaughan.

Referred to: Appropriations/Base Budget.

March 24, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE E-NC AUTHORITY TO SUPPORT
CONNECTIVITY INITIATIVES AND TO ADVANCE TECHNOLOGY-BASED
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

Whereas, the e-NC Authority since its inception eight years ago has received \$2,395,000 in State operating support, creating an economic impact of more than \$3,000,000 in its work to increase broadband access, using the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis metrics; and

Whereas, the sum of \$3,192,500 in State funding has been awarded for Business and Technology Telecenter (BTT) grants since the inception of the e-NC Business & Technology Telecenters (BTTs) program; and

Whereas, the e-NC Authority has seen more than 1,675 jobs directly created through the BTTs since 2001; and

Whereas, in addition, this local community impact by the Business and Technology Telecenters has seen more than \$221,000,000 in direct revenue impact to the economy of the seven counties in which the BTTs are located, as well as direct to the State tax revenues of more than \$14,500,000; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the e-NC Authority the sum of five hundred and five thousand dollars (\$505,000) for the 2009-2010 fiscal year and the sum of five hundred and five thousand dollars (\$505,000) for the 2010-2011 fiscal year in recurring funds to continue its operational, advocacy, and research functions and assistance to communities for broadband deployment. These funds shall be in addition to the four hundred ninety-five thousand dollars (\$495,000) the e-NC Authority currently receives from recurring funding from the State budget. These funds will allow the e-NC Authority to continue its efforts statewide, serving as the primary advocate in North Carolina for universal high-speed Internet access and the economic growth potential possible through expanded broadband, through continuation of e-NC Authority's operations and its work on technology-based economic development to create jobs in North Carolina.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the e-NC Authority the sum of twelve million five hundred thousand dollars (\$12,500,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2009-2010 fiscal year to be used to bring communities up to the point where at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the households in all 100 counties will have the ability to access a high-speed Internet connection. These funds will allow the e-NC Authority to then work toward increasing high-speed Internet access for all households in all North Carolina counties up to eighty percent (80%), then ninety percent (90%), and eventually up to one hundred percent (100%). These funds shall be granted through a formal request for proposals process



1 with a provider match required when appropriate. Up to five percent (5%) of this connectivity
2 funding may be designated for grant administration. In addition, these funds may be used by
3 the e-NC Authority to assist community and public and private nonprofit entities that need to
4 provide a match to receive funds from the broadband stimulus monies available from the
5 federal government.

6 **SECTION 3.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the e-NC Authority
7 the sum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2009-2010 fiscal year
8 to continue support of its BTT program and to establish up to two new centers in underserved
9 areas of the State. All grants to establish new centers would be awarded through a competitive
10 bidding process. The BTT program would then include two new centers and the following:

- 11 (1) Blue Ridge Business Development Center in Sparta, Alleghany County.
- 12 (2) New Ventures Business Development, Inc., in Wadesboro, Anson County.
- 13 (3) Tri-County Community College TeleCenter in Murphy, Cherokee County.
- 14 (4) Northeast Technology & Business Center in Williamston, Martin County.
- 15 (5) The Roanoke Center in Rich Square, Northampton County.
- 16 (6) Rockingham County Business & Technology Center in Wentworth,
17 Rockingham County.
- 18 (7) Foothills Connect Business & Technology Center in Rutherfordton,
19 Rutherford County.

20 **SECTION 4.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the e-NC Authority
21 the sum of one million five hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000) for the 2009-2010 fiscal
22 year to support public Internet access sites in communities with low levels of connectivity and
23 to provide digital literacy programs and access to communities with low participation rates in
24 the digital economy. These funds shall be granted through a formal request for proposals
25 process. These funds will be utilized to assist the public access centers refresh the technology
26 equipment they have been using for the past five years. Their current equipment shall be
27 refurbished and utilized by the local public access center or local school in a lending program
28 for students who do not have a computer at home. In addition, these funds may be used by the
29 e-NC Authority to assist community and public and private nonprofit entities that need to
30 provide a match to receive funds from the broadband stimulus monies available from the
31 federal government.

32 **SECTION 5.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2009.