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**For Immediate Release**

## **FCC AUTHORIZES NEARLY \$112.2 MILLION IN FUNDING FOR RURAL BROADBAND**

### ***Fifth Round of Funding from Connect America Fund Auction Starts This Month and Includes Nine States***

WASHINGTON, September 12, 2019—The Federal Communications Commission today authorized over \$112.2 million in funding over the next decade to expand broadband to nearly 48,000 unserved rural homes and businesses in nine states, representing the fifth wave of support from last year's successful Connect America Fund Phase II auction. Broadband providers will begin receiving funding later this month.

"Today, we take another step towards ensuring that all Americans have access to high-speed broadband," said FCC Chairman Ajit Pai. "This fifth round of funding will provide rural Americans from California to Ohio with the economic, educational, civic, and healthcare opportunities that Internet access makes possible."

In total, the auction last year allocated \$1.488 billion in support over the next ten years to expand broadband to more than 700,000 unserved rural homes and small businesses nationwide. The FCC has now authorized five waves of funding, and today's action brings total authorized funding to over \$1 billion, which will expand connectivity to nearly 388,000 homes and businesses nationwide. Additional rounds will be authorized in the coming months.

Funding applications approved by the Commission today include the following:

- Cal.net, Inc., is receiving over \$50.5 million over 10 years to deploy service to 20,859 homes and businesses in California, most of which will get access to service delivering speeds of at least 100 Mbps downstream/20 Mbps upstream, using fixed wireless technology
- W.A.T.C.H TV is receiving nearly \$53.4 million over 10 years to deploy service to 23,957 rural homes and businesses in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, most of which will get access to service delivering speeds of at least 100 Mbps downstream/20 Mbps upstream, using fixed wireless technology
- Four rural phone companies are receiving \$1.8 million to offer gigabit-speed fiber service to 536 rural homes and businesses in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin

Below is a complete list by state of the companies receiving support, the number of homes and businesses served (locations), the amount of support over 10 years, and the minimum download/upload speeds to be provided:

<b>State</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Minimum Speed</b>	<b>Support/10 Years</b>	<b>Number of Locations</b>
California	Cal.net	100/20 Mbps	\$50,516,652	20,365
California	Cal.net	25/3 Mbps	*	494
Illinois	Illinois Fiber Connect	1 Gbps/500 Mbps	\$310,031	98
Illinois	ShawneeLEC	100/20 Mbps	\$1,714,708	494
Illinois	ShawneeLEC	1 Gbps/500 Mbps	*	73
Illinois	W.A.T.C.H. TV	100/20 Mbps	\$24,366,144	3,362
Illinois	W.A.T.C.H. TV	25/3 Mbps	*	2,679
Indiana	W.A.T.C.H. TV	100/20 Mbps	\$14,883,685	9,479
Indiana	W.A.T.C.H. TV	25/3 Mbps	*	2,058
Iowa	Casey Mutual Telephone	1 Gbps/500 Mbps	\$244,923	107
Minnesota	Consolidated Telephone	1 Gbps/500 Mbps	\$934,934	358
Minnesota	Wikstrom Telephone	1 Gbps/500 Mbps	\$532,557	56
New Mexico	Echo Wireless Broadband	25/3 Mbps	\$1,542,198	624
Ohio	W.A.T.C.H. TV	100/20 Mbps	\$13,121,990	5,736
Ohio	W.A.T.C.H. TV	25/3 Mbps	*	643
Texas	Echo Wireless Broadband	25/3 Mbps	\$3,933,713	1,093
Wisconsin	Wood County Telephone	1 Gbps/500 Mbps	\$81,920	15
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$112,183,454</b>	<b>47,734</b>
			* included in company total	

The Connect America Fund Phase II auction is part of a broader effort by the FCC to close the digital divide in rural America. On August 1, the FCC proposed taking its biggest single step to date toward closing the rural digital divide by establishing the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, which would direct up to \$20.4 billion to expand broadband in unserved rural areas.

Providers must build out to 40% of the assigned homes and businesses in the areas won in a state within three years. Buildout must increase by 20% in each subsequent year, until complete buildout is reached at the end of the sixth year.

More information on the auction is available at <https://www.fcc.gov/auction/903>. A map of winning bids is available at <https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/maps/caf2-auction903-results/>.

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*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*