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For Immediate Release

**FCC ANNUAL BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT REPORT SHOWS
DIGITAL DIVIDE IS RAPIDLY CLOSING**

***Number of Rural Americans Lacking Access to 25/3 Mbps Broadband Service
Has Fallen More Than 46% Since 2016***

WASHINGTON, January 19, 2021—The Federal Communications Commission today released its annual Broadband Deployment Report, which shows that significant progress has been made to bridge the digital divide. For example, the gap between urban and rural Americans with access to 25/3 Mbps fixed broadband service has been nearly halved, falling from 30 percentage points at the end of 2016 to just 16 points at the end of 2019. Additionally, more than three-quarters of those Americans in areas newly served in 2019—nearly 3.7 million—live in rural areas, bringing the number of rural Americans in areas served by at least 25/3 Mbps broadband service to nearly 83%, up 15 points since 2016. The report showed an overall decrease of more than 20% in the number of Americans without access to 25/3 Mbps broadband service since last year’s report, from more than 18.1 million at the end of 2018 to fewer than 14.5 million at the end of 2019.

“From my first day as Chairman, the FCC’s top priority has been closing the digital divide. It’s heartening to see these numbers, which demonstrate that we’ve been delivering results for the American people,” said FCC Chairman Ajit Pai. “In just three years, the number of American consumers living in areas without access to fixed broadband at 25/3 Mbps has been nearly cut in half. I’ve personally met some of these consumers, from Mandan, North Dakota to Ethete, Wyoming. And over the last two years, the percentage of rural Americans without access to mobile broadband with a median speed of 10/3 Mbps has been slashed from over 35% to under 10%. Moreover, at the end of 2019, mobile providers offered 5G service to approximately 60% of Americans, a figure that is substantially higher today.

“These successes resulted from forward-thinking policies that removed barriers to infrastructure investment and promoted competition and innovation. I look forward to seeing the Commission continue its efforts to ensure that all Americans have broadband access. Especially with the success of last year’s Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase I auction, I have no doubt that these figures will continue to improve as auction winners deploy networks in the areas for which they got FCC funding.”

Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 requires that the FCC determine annually whether advanced telecommunications capability is being deployed to all Americans “in a reasonable and timely fashion.” Given the compelling evidence before it, the 2021 report finds for a third consecutive year that deployment is occurring in a reasonable and timely manner.

Nonetheless, the Commission continues its work to close the digital divide with the upcoming 5G Fund auction and the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase II auction.

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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).