

GOLDEN STATE CONNECT AUTHORITY

"Reducing the Digital Divide"

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Golden State Connect Authority Holds Inaugural Meeting *Aims to Reduce the Digital Divide in Rural California*

SACRAMENTO, CA – Rural county representatives from across the State of California gathered in Merced County last week to hold the inaugural meeting of the Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA). The first of its kind in the State of California, GSCA is a joint powers authority comprised of thirty-six member counties with the collective purpose of implementing affordable, reliable broadband in rural California.

Last week marked the first meeting of GSCA's Board of Directors, consisting of an elected county supervisor from each member county. The meeting resulted in foundational decisions for the organization including confirmation of the county membership, approval of an operating budget, and the establishment of an Executive Committee. The Board also appointed key leadership positions with Calaveras County Supervisor Jack Garamendi to serve as GSCA Board Chair and Alpine County Supervisor David Griffith as GSCA Board Vice Chair.

"GSCA represents a significant opportunity for rural counties to unite efforts to effectively deploy broadband to unserved and underserved communities," said Supervisor Garamendi. "I look forward to working with my fellow GSCA Board members to advance access to this essential resource in rural California.

The formation of GSCA was initiated in August 2021 to better assist rural counties in taking advantage of emerging broadband expansion opportunities. By leveraging collective efforts on behalf of its members, GSCA will provide technical assistance and establish broadband infrastructure in under connected areas. Specifically, GSCA will assist rural counties in identifying pathways for development of broadband infrastructure within their communities, including the construction of municipal owned and/or operated broadband systems, among other options.

"Access to broadband is a necessity for the overall health, safety, and economic well-being of our communities," said Supervisor Griffith. "Additional resources provided through GSCA will

assist local governments in navigating the planning and implementation processes for broadband deployment to further reduce the digital divide.”

The next meeting of the GSCA Board of Directors is scheduled for February 9, 2021. Additional information regarding GSCA is available at www.goldenstateconnect.org and will continue to be updated as efforts advance.

ABOUT GOLDEN STATE CONNECT AUTHORITY (GSCA)

The Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA) is a joint powers authority comprised of thirty-six member counties designed for the purpose of increasing access to reliable, affordable high-speed broadband for all rural Californians. Governance of GSCA is conducted by elected county supervisors from rural counties that elect to join GSCA. To learn more about GSCA, visit goldenstateconnect.org. GSCA is an affiliated entity of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC).

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GSCA's Thirty-Six Member Counties