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Golden State Connect Authority and UTOPIA Fiber Partner to Deploy High-Speed Internet in Rural California

SACRAMENTO, CA – Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA) has entered a partnership with Utah Telecommunication Open Infrastructure Agency (UTOPIA) Fiber to assist in the development and operation of reliable, affordable high-speed internet infrastructure in rural California. This partnership will bolster the efforts of GSCA to bridge the divide in internet access across its 38 rural member counties through the deployment of an Open-Access, municipal broadband fiber network.

GSCA is currently identifying project locations in rural California for installation of broadband fiber networks, beginning with select initial locations and then expanding to additional project areas. These projects will utilize an Open-Access municipal broadband model, under which multiple internet service providers use the same publicly owned high-speed network to provide a range of services to homes and businesses. This enables increased competition among internet service providers and greater assurance of affordability for consumers.

To ensure successful and efficient development and operation of such networks, GSCA has elected to partner with an organization experienced in the administration of Open-Access broadband infrastructure. For this reason, GSCA looked to UTOPIA Fiber, an industry leader in Open Access, municipal broadband and the operator of the largest Open-Access, municipal fiber network in the United States.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) initiating the partnership was approved by the GSCA Board of Directors on March 25 and the UTOPIA Fiber Board on April 11. The MOU contemplates that UTOPIA Fiber will provide administrative services for GSCA's proposed broadband networks,

utilizing their vast experience building and operating similar Open-Access, municipal networks in other locations in the nation.

“UTOPIA Fiber has proven itself to be an industry leader with demonstrated expertise in establishing and operating an Open Access network that invites internet service providers to compete for customers, resulting in price and speed choices for consumers,” said GSCA Board Chair and Calaveras County Supervisor Jack Garamendi. “GSCA looks forward to building upon the knowledge and experience of UTOPIA Fiber and working together to advance internet access across rural California.”

“The economic and social benefits of connecting communities to high-speed broadband are significant and UTOPIA Fiber is pleased to partner with GSCA to bring desperately-needed service to California’s rural communities,” said Roger Timmerman, Executive Director, UTOPIA Fiber. “This partnership will help change the lives of millions of Californians, providing modern-day connectivity to residents and businesses who will be able to fully participate in the digital economy and enjoy a higher quality-of-life. Not only does high-speed broadband enable remote working, learning, and telehealth, it also provides the infrastructure needed to power better wireless coverage and advanced precision agriculture—and that’s just the beginning. We’re very excited for what’s to come,” he added.

UTOPIA Fiber is an interlocal agency owned by 11 Utah cities that joined together in 2002 to build, deploy, and operate a fiber-to-the-premises network to every business and household within their communities. Since 2009, UTOPIA Fiber and its affiliated organization Utah Infrastructure Agency, have designed, built, and operated nearly \$400 million worth of Open-Access fiber projects in 19 Utah cities at no cost to taxpayers. The agency has also secured operational partnerships in Idaho and Montana to expand high-speed broadband access in parts of those states.

For additional information, resources, and updates about GSCA visit www.goldenstateconnect.org. Information regarding UTOPIA Fiber, including areas of operation and services provided, is available at www.utopiafiber.com.

ABOUT GOLDEN STATE CONNECT AUTHORITY

Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA) is a joint powers authority comprised of 38 rural California counties designed for the purpose of increasing access to reliable, affordable high-speed internet for the residents and businesses of those counties. GSCA will assist rural counties in identifying pathways for development of internet infrastructure within their communities, including the construction of municipal-owned and/or operated internet systems, among other options. Get up to speed with GSCA at www.goldenstateconnect.org.

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