



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GSCA Contact:

Carolyn Jhajj

Communications Director

916-447-4806

cjhajj@rcrcnet.org

South Salinas Valley Broadband Authority Approves Partnership with Golden State Connect Authority for Deployment of Open-Access, Municipal Internet

SACRAMENTO, CA – On August 18, the South Salinas Valley Broadband Authority approved a memorandum of understanding with Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA) to facilitate installation of reliable, affordable high-speed internet infrastructure in the Salinas Valley in Monterey County. This is one of several initial project locations that GSCA is exploring across its 39 rural member counties for the deployment of an open-access, municipal broadband fiber network.

The South Salinas Valley Broadband Authority, was formed through the signing of a Joint Powers Agreement among the cities of King, Greenfield, Soledad, and Gonzalez and the County of Monterey in May 2022. GSCA will work alongside the Authority to design, fund and develop an open-access, municipal broadband model that will bring affordable, high-speed internet to the Salinas Valley.

Under this model 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.

“Expanding access to reliable, high-speed internet is critical for establishing equal opportunities for education, economic growth, healthcare, and more,” said Monterey County Supervisor and Chair of the South Salinas Valley Broadband Authority, Chris Lopez. “This partnership between GSCA and the South Salinas Valley Broadband Authority will be instrumental in advancing our

efforts to connect the underserved residents and businesses of the Salinas Valley and to reduce the digital divide within our communities.”

“On behalf of GSCA, I want to thank the South Salinas Valley Broadband Authority for their interest in partnering with GSCA to establish high-speed internet for their community,” said GSCA Board Chair and Calaveras County Supervisor Jack Garamendi. “We look forward to working together to deploy an innovative, municipal internet service model in the Salinas Valley and improving access to this increasingly vital resource.”

The Salinas Valley was identified as an initial proposed project location, along with other potential sites, through a detailed process evaluating several factors, including the level of service need, estimated costs, and opportunities for partnership with local government and other agencies. GSCA’s intent is to begin with a select number of initial locations and then expand to additional project areas within rural California.

To ensure successful and efficient development and operation of such networks, GSCA intends to partner with 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. UTOPIA Fiber will provide operational 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.

GSCA will now begin network planning and financing efforts in coordination with the South Salinas Valley Broadband Authority, targeting underserved residents and businesses. Additional details will be provided to the community as efforts progress.

For additional information, resources, and updates about GSCA visit www.goldenstateconnect.org.

ABOUT GOLDEN STATE CONNECT AUTHORITY

Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA) is a joint powers authority comprised of 39 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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