



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**GSCA Contact:**  
Carolyn Jhaji  
Communications Director  
916-447-4806  
[cjhaji@rcrcnet.org](mailto:cjhaji@rcrcnet.org)

### **Golden State Connect Authority and UTOPIA Fiber Formalize Partnership to Deploy High-Speed Internet in Rural California**

**SACRAMENTO, CA** – Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA) and Utah Telecommunication Open Infrastructure Agency (UTOPIA) Fiber have formalized a partnership agreement to assist in the development and administration of reliable, affordable high-speed internet infrastructure in rural California. Through this partnership, GSCA seeks to further its mission to bridge the divide in internet access across its 40 rural member counties by deploying 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 assist in the administration of this effort, 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. On Monday, April 10, 2023, UTOPIA Fiber’s Board of Directors voted to enter a Fiber Communication Service Agreement with GSCA, following a similar vote by the GSCA Board of Directors during their March 8, 2023 meeting.

Under this agreement, UTOPIA Fiber will work on behalf of GSCA to administer broadband deployment in rural California. Specifically, UTOPIA Fiber will execute comprehensive consultative services consisting of high-level network design, network engineering, project management, construction management, and related services. Additionally, UTOPIA Fiber will provide ongoing operational support of GSCA’s broadband network, including marketing, customer service and technical support, billing and collections, management of maintenance oversight and repair, and provision of a 24/7 network operations center.

“This agreement marks a significant step in the realization and development of GSCA’s mission to bring affordable, equitable and reliable high-speed internet to rural California,” said **GSCA Board Chair and**

**Calaveras County Supervisor Jack Garamendi.** “UTOPIA Fiber will bring valuable experience and technical expertise into the development and administration of our Open-Access broadband network and play a key role in supporting rural communities’ broadband needs. We look forward to being a part of the broadband solution for rural California as our two organizations move forward with the next stage of broadband deployment.”

“We are very excited to partner with Golden State Connect Authority to bring the fastest Internet in the nation to 40 counties in rural California,” shared **Roger Timmerman, Executive Director, UTOPIA Fiber.** “This Agreement will mark a new era for countless residents and businesses to benefit from affordable and reliable high-speed connectivity that will vastly improve their futures. As we have seen repeatedly in communities across rural America, when local governments partner together and make this service a priority, constituents enjoy a better quality of life, greater cost-savings, and increased economic success. All of us at UTOPIA Fiber applaud GSCA for creating this partnership and look forward to working together to deliver an Open-Access fiber network to transform their communities.”

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](http://www.goldenstateconnect.org). Information regarding UTOPIA Fiber, including areas of operation and services provided, is available at [www.utopiafiber.com](http://www.utopiafiber.com).

#### **ABOUT GOLDEN STATE CONNECT AUTHORITY**

*Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA) is a joint powers authority comprised of 40 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](http://www.goldenstateconnect.org).*

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