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Sent: Wednesday, May 06, 2015 9:23 AM
To: Coriell, Scott
Subject: Gov. Shumlin Announces Nearly \$900,000 in Broadband Grants to Underserved Vermont Communities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 6, 2015

Gov. Shumlin Announces Nearly \$900,000 in Broadband Grants to Underserved Vermont Communities

Communities Include Norwich, Pittsfield, Randolph, Royalton, Jamaica, Rochester, Reading & Bradford

MONTPELIER – Eight rural, underserved Vermont communities are getting help to boost broadband internet speeds. The towns of Norwich, Pittsfield, Randolph, Royalton, Jamaica, Rochester, Reading, and Bradford will receive nearly \$900,000 for speed improvement upgrades, Gov. Peter Shumlin announced today.

“I’m proud that we have reached near universal broadband coverage in this state in the last four years,” Gov. Shumlin said. “Now our focus has to turn to improving the infrastructure we have rolled out so that it keeps pace with the changing needs of a 21st century economy. That means boosting broadband speeds, and these grants will do that in some of the hardest to reach Vermont towns.”

“The great thing about these awards is that we are taking these underserved addresses and ‘leap-frogging’ their speeds from among the slowest, to among the fastest available – that will serve these most difficult sites for many years into the future” said Christopher Recchia, Commissioner of the Department of Public Service. “This will be the Department’s objective in our future work as funds become available.”

The largest award, \$354,000, will go the ECFiber to serve addresses in the towns of Norwich, Pittsfield, Randolph, and Royalton. FairPoint will receive \$290,000 to serve addresses in Reading and Bradford. And Comcast will receive \$230,640 to serve addresses in Norwich, Jamaica, and Rochester. In total, the funds will serve 175 underserved addresses in these areas and will also bring better service to additional locations.

The funding for these grants comes through the Connectivity Initiative signed into law by the Governor in June of 2014 to help spur last mile investment in rural broadband networks, and these awards represent the first round of funding since the law went into effect. The eight communities receiving the first round of funding were chosen because the Department of Public Service considers them to be among the hardest locations to serve.

The Governor made expanding broadband to every corner of the state a priority when he came to office. Today, just about all addresses in the state either have broadband access or have a funded broadband solution in place.

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