



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Otter Tail Telcom (Park Region) Expands Broadband Network in Otter Tail County**

October 11, 2024 — OTTER TAIL COUNTY, Minn.— Otter Tail County and Otter Tail Telcom (dba Park Region) are thrilled to announce the internet fiber services network expansion in several townships near Fergus Falls. This MN DEED low-density program project will construct a fiber-to-the-home network for 286 unserved residents and businesses. Expanding broadband internet highlights the local commitment to ensuring that rural areas can access high-speed, reliable internet services.

"Broadband is crucial infrastructure that gives Otter Tail County a competitive advantage economically and expands options for work and living," said Kurt Mortenson, Chair of the Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners. "This grant will expand high-speed internet to over 280 homes and businesses across six different townships, providing business competitiveness, improved education and health care access, social connectivity and enhanced quality of life for Otter Tail County residents."

Extending broadband internet to rural townships presents challenges that require partnerships and collaboration. Park Region and Otter Tail County are grateful for the support from townships, residents, elected officials and the Office of Broadband Development/MN DEED. Without their support, this expansion of broadband infrastructure would not be possible.

The following townships are partners in the expansion: Aastad, Buse, Carlisle, Orwell, Oscar and Western.

"We are excited to expand this vital service to the townships near the Fergus Falls area," said Park Region GM/CEO Dave Bickett. "Our mission has always been 'Keeping you connected to the things that matter most,' and with this expansion, we look forward to extending that mission to even more residents and businesses in our community."

Park Region is dedicated to creating opportunities for growth and innovation through this investment in the area's communities. The expanded network will provide residents and businesses in the rural townships with access to high-speed internet, empowering them with the resources they need for education, telehealth, remote work, and overall connectedness.

"Otter Tail County's progress in broadband infrastructure and continued efforts are largely the result of strong partnerships. As we celebrate this grant, I want to thank our county and township leaders for recognizing the importance of broadband and contributing the matching funds needed to qualify for these state grants," said Senator Jordan Rasmusson. "I also want to commend Park Region for stepping up to take on one of the most challenging projects in the state."

Improving broadband services will benefit farmers, ranchers, business owners and telecommuters. Expanding broadband will also create an opportunity for new businesses to relocate to Otter Tail County's rural area, increase job and population growth, and significantly impact the county's economy.

#### About MN DEED Broadband Grant Funding

The Low-Density Program is a competitive grant program that provides financial resources for new and existing providers to invest in building broadband infrastructure in low-density areas of the state

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that currently lack high-speed internet. According to the Office of Broadband Development (OBD), DEED has awarded over \$400 million in Border-to-Border or Low Population Density grants, providing broadband access to nearly 120,000 homes and businesses. Communities and internet service providers contributed over \$48 million in matching funds for this grant round and over \$400 million for all grant rounds to date. Learn more about these grant programs on OBD's website at [mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/grant-program/](http://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/grant-program/)