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## **CTC Receives USDA Award to Expand Broadband Internet**

**Brainerd, MN** – Today, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Secretary Stephen Censky announced that USDA has invested \$11 million in three, high-speed broadband infrastructure projects that will create or improve rural e-Connectivity for more than 1,395 rural households and nearly 120 businesses throughout several counties in Minnesota and northern Iowa. This is one of many funding announcements in the first round of USDA’s ReConnect Pilot Program investments.

CTC was awarded a \$5.2 million ReConnect Program grant to construct a fiber-to-the-premises (FTTP) network of up to one gigabit of symmetrical high-speed internet to nearly 700 homes and public facilities in portions of Cherry and Great Scott townships in northeastern Minnesota’s Iron Range area.

CTC will leverage existing middle-mile infrastructure, in partnership with Northeast Service Cooperative (NESC), and require only an additional 157.1 miles of new FTTP construction. The funded service area includes 667 households, two educational facilities and two critical community facilities in St. Louis County. CTC will invest \$1,743,169 in the project; a 25% match.

“We’re thrilled to receive this award,” said Kristi Westbrook, CEO and General Manager at CTC. “Residents and business owners in the Cherry Township area have made it very clear that they need high-speed internet in order to thrive. We look forward to partnering with NESC and to serving this area for years to come.”

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As part of this round of funding, Harmony Telephone Company was also awarded a \$2.7 million ReConnect Program loan and a \$2.7 million ReConnect Program grant, while Osage Municipal Utilities in northern Iowa was awarded a \$397,749 ReConnect Program grant.

“When Americans are connected to high-speed internet, productivity and prosperity skyrocket,” Censky said. “This task of providing rural Americans with broadband is of the highest importance for President Trump and his Administration. We cannot leave millions of Americans out of the successes of this booming economy simply because they do not have access to the internet.”

In March 2018, Congress provided \$600 million to USDA to expand broadband infrastructure and services in rural America. On Dec. 13, 2018, Secretary Perdue announced the rules of the program, called “ReConnect,” including how the loans and grants will be awarded to help build broadband infrastructure in rural America. USDA received 146 applications between May 31, 2019, and July 12, 2019, requesting \$1.4 billion in funding across all three ReConnect Program funding products: 100 percent loan, 100 percent grant, and loan-grant combinations. USDA is reviewing applications and announcing approved projects on a rolling basis. Additional investments in all three categories will be made in the coming weeks.

More information about the ReConnect Pilot Program is available at [www.usda.gov/reconnect](http://www.usda.gov/reconnect).

*CTC is a technology advisor and full service telecommunications company based in Brainerd, MN. Formed in 1952, CTC has grown into a complete communications provider offering telephone, high-speed internet, digital television, and IT services to businesses and individuals throughout central and northern Minnesota. More information about CTC can be found at [www.goctc.com](http://www.goctc.com).*

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