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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CTC Receives DEED Award to Expand Broadband Internet**

Brainerd, MN – On Thursday, December 8 the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) announced that they have awarded over \$99 million through their Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant program. The 61 projects that were awarded throughout the state will be matched by nearly \$152 million in local funds, for a total investment of over \$251 million.

The funding, which was approved during the 2021 and 2022 legislative sessions, will be used by broadband providers to build out infrastructure and provide services to unserved and underserved locations. This round of funding will provide internet access to over 33,000 businesses, homes, and community institutions across the state.

Consolidated Telephone Company (CTC) was one of the grant recipients, receiving \$4,857,030 in funding. This will be combined with an equal amount in matching funds from CTC, Cass County, City of Cloquet, City of Rice Lake, Gnesen Township, and Sylvan Township. When successfully completed, the nearly \$10 million project will provide internet services - with speeds of up to 1Gig - to over 1,800 homes and businesses in portions of St. Louis, Carlton, and Cass counties.

“We’re incredibly excited about this award and the partnership that it represents,” said Kristi Westbrook, CEO and General Manager at CTC. “This project will be instrumental for families and businesses as well as for future economic growth in these communities. We look forward to providing everyone with fast, reliable internet and top-notch local customer service for years to come.”

Once complete, the project will allow rural residents to work from home, safely stay in their homes longer, and increase communication options for area businesses and residents... all while boosting economic development to the area. Broadband will bring enhanced employment opportunities and educational experiences to the thousands of rural residents that call this area home.

Created in 2014, the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program provides state resources that help make the financial case for new and existing providers to invest in building broadband infrastructure into unserved and underserved areas of the state. Grants were awarded through a competitive application process. More information about the program is available at <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/grant-program/>.

*CTC is a technology advisor and full-service telecommunications cooperative 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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