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OFFICE OF REGULATORY STAFF APPROVES \$26.1M IN INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION

COLUMBIA, SC – Aug. 20, 2020 – As part of the broadband infrastructure component of Act 142 authorized by the South Carolina General Assembly and signed by the Governor on June 25, 2020, the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) is approving the funding of 81 applications submitted by 13 Broadband Service Providers (BSPs). One application is in pending status. This infrastructure expansion will make high-speed broadband available to homes, businesses, schools, health care facilities, and other institutions in unserved areas across South Carolina.

Subject to execution of a funding agreement and the evaluation of any duplication of infrastructure, the projects to be awarded are listed [here](#).

The 81 applications are for areas identified through broadband mapping efforts completed by Revolution D, Inc., and represent a total investment of approximately \$26.1 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding.

This new broadband infrastructure could bring service to approximately 27,994 homes and 771 businesses, supplementing industry investment with federal CARES Act funding. Based on the applications received, the average federal CARES Act funding is approximately \$884 per home and business.

Act 142 allocated \$50 million of CARES Act funds to the ORS for administering the South Carolina Broadband Infrastructure Program to assist COVID-19 impacted individuals, families, and communities.

Of that total, \$20 million was budgeted for the ongoing Online Learning Initiative, and \$29.7 million was allocated to support broadband infrastructure expansion. The Broadband Infrastructure Program application period opened Aug. 5 and closed Aug. 14. Projects must be completed no later than December 18, 2020.

The South Carolina Broadband Infrastructure Program was created to provide high-speed broadband internet access to unserved South Carolinians who have been directly impacted by COVID-19. Impacted communities or households are those hindered in their ability to respond to the challenges of COVID-19 due to a lack of broadband (as defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) standard of 25/3 Mbps download/upload speeds), thus limiting access to online learning, healthcare via telehealth, and limiting one's ability to work from home.

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