



Upson County Board of Commissioners & Highline

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UPSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AWARDED FUNDS FOR BROADBAND ACCESSIBILITY

The Upson County Board of Commissioners and Highline are pleased to announce that \$4,430,000.00 has been awarded toward providing more reliable access to broadband in Upson County. Governor Kemp, along with members of the Broadband Infrastructure Committee and state leaders, revealed on Tuesday, February 1, 2022, that the Upson County Board of Commissioners was one of 49 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant projects that was chosen to receive funds.

The funds awarded to Upson County will serve roughly 2,124 residences. The Georgia Broadband Availability Map was an integral resource that aided the state in identifying the necessity of projects. Utilizing this map, the selection process was aimed at projects that will encourage healthy competition for the private sector, also taking into respect parallel funding streams available for broadband access or expansion. Geographic location was also considered in order to ensure funds were distributed equitably.

The Upson County Board of Commissioners worked together with Highline to submit the grant application that resulted in the awarding of these funds. Highline plans to also construct additional Fiber network within the county and access for schools, government building, and a local community college to ensure that the Broadband reach is more extensive.

“This is a great opportunity to improve the education, healthcare and economic development for everyone in Upson County, and to bring Internet to underserved households,” said Deb Rand, CEO of Highline South. “We have received incredible support from our partner Upson County and key stakeholders, including the Thomaston-Upson Chamber of Commerce, the Thomaston-Upson County Industrial Development Authority, and Upson EMC.”

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Commission Chairman Norman Allen shared, "I am excited about the opportunities that will be available to Upson County citizens as a result of the funds that have been awarded. More reliable broadband will offer citizens greater options for employment and education, as well as allow Upson County to compete with more urban areas. I would like to thank Governor Kemp, Senator John Kennedy, Representative Beth Camp, the Broadband Infrastructure Committee, Upson County staff, and Highline staff for their dedication throughout this process."

The Upson County Board of Commissioners plans to deploy the broadband project this year and looks forward to sharing more details as they become available.

About **Highline**:

At Highline, we believe everyone should have access to the most reliable, fastest internet speed available – at a fair price, regardless of where you live and work. Highline's owner ITC has been in business for more than 125 years, and over the last 25 years, Highline has built, owned, and operated fiber networks that have thousands of subscribers. Highline currently serves the communication and internet needs for thousands of residents and businesses in Colorado, Georgia, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska and Texas. Highline works closely with communities to build state-of-the-art Fiber-to-the-Premise, lightning-fast Gigabit networks, and we are currently building Fiber-to-the-Premise networks to provide 2 Gigabit internet service to thousands of homes and businesses across the country that are underserved by existing providers.