Surf Internet Begins Construction on 250-mile Fiber Network, the Largest Rural Broadband Project in Northern Indiana

ELKHART, Ind. (March 16, 2023) – Surf Internet^{SM} is beginning construction on over 250 miles of fiber internet to rural homes throughout northern Indiana, leveraging over $6 million awarded by Indiana's Next Level Connections (NLC) Broadband Grant Program, along with its private investment of $3.6 million. This is the largest fiber-optic infrastructure project in northern Indiana to specifically address underserved communities. Surf will begin construction in Elkhart County in late March, with La Porte and Newton County projects to follow later in the year.

"Construction on these Indiana projects represents the tangible success we've had in our strategy to combine grant dollars along with our own investments to provide underserved residents with high-speed internet," says Surf CEO Gene Crusie. "Rather than focusing only on homes in densely populated areas, we are applying for grant subsidies in spread-out areas that would otherwise be financially unfeasible to reach on our own. By partnering with local communities in this way, we can expand our fiber network even further, opening the door for better opportunities in education, business, and personal connections."

"When we launched our community outreach to those residents impacted by the NLC Grant area, we were overwhelmed by the outpouring of support from the community," stated Lana Frank, Surf's Chief Marketing Officer. "Nearly 70 percent of the households we surveyed indicated a high level of interest for our service."

NLC Grant and Surf Internet matching funds are earmarked for fiber-optic broadband projects in Elkhart, La Porte, and Newton counties. In Elkhart County, where construction is set to begin, the grant will create a redundant loop to Wakarusa from Goshen, specifically addressing an underserved population southwest of Goshen. A fiber-optic network will also be constructed along a rural stretch of County Road 28 from County Road 27 in Goshen to just past State Road 13 in Middlebury. In total, 478 households and 25 businesses and/or anchor institutions in Elkhart County that would otherwise be without internet connectivity will have access to high-speed broadband.

"Increasing the fiber and broadband options for Elkhart County continues to be imperative. Having continuous investment to improve these connections keeps our communities tied to each other and the world. Quite frankly, investment in broadband networks in urban and rural areas will make us attractive to all people, as well as position Elkhart County to be a thriving community for residents and businesses," said Elkhart County Commissioner Suzie Weirick.

- more -

Permits and network design are being finalized for NLC Grant projects in La Porte and Newton counties. In LaPorte County, the communities of Westville, Wanatah, Union Mills, Rolling Prairie, and Hanna will be interconnected, covering 953 homes. In Newton County, service will be provided to 88 rural households and two businesses near Lake Village. Construction in all three counties will be complete by April 2024.

The NLC Broadband Grant Program has awarded a total of $268 million for broadband infrastructure to more than 74,800 homes and commercial locations. When combined with private and local investment, over $580 million has been leveraged since 2018. Projects will have been completed in 83 of Indiana's 92 counties through the three rounds of the awards. Click here for a map showing the coverage area of all three rounds.

Residents and business owners wanting project updates can visit Surf's construction page at https://construction.surfinternet.com/. To see if services are currently available for a specific address, visit https://surfinternet.com/ and click the blue "Check Availability" button.

About Surf Internet
Surf Internet is an innovative fiber-optic internet company that serves as the essential gateway to connectivity across the Great Lakes Region of Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. The company is building a bridge to the wide-open future by delivering high-speed, reliable internet to homes and businesses in underserved, rural communities. Surf's 140-plus-person team is local, giving them an edge when it comes to customer care and advocacy for the region. Headquartered in Elkhart, Ind., Surf also has offices in La Porte, Ind., Byron Center and Fowlerville, Mich., and Coal City and Rock Falls, Ill. Learn more at https://surfinternet.com.

###