



May 30, 2024 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Surf Internet and Newton County Partner to Extend High-Speed Fiber-Optic Internet Throughout County

ELKHART, Ind. (May 30, 2024) - Surf Internet® and the Newton County Economic Development Commission (EDC) are paving the way for nearly all of the Indiana county's residents to be connected to high-speed, fiber-optic internet by the end of 2024. Newton County is investing \$4 million towards the project, matched with \$6.6 million from Surf, for a total \$10.6 million investment across multiple areas, serving nearly 4,000 households.

The combination of private and local funds allows Surf to provide fiber-optic services to previously underserved areas, including Lake Township, incorporated areas of Lake Village, Roselawn, and Thayer, and extremely rural areas in the county. As a result, over 97 percent of the county will be serviced by fiber-optic broadband by the end of 2024.

"Newton County is a perfect example of Surf's vision for the rural communities of the Great Lakes region," said Surf CEO Gene Crusie. "Our primary dedication is to rural areas like theirs, which have long been neglected and lacking in services. Despite the absence of major urban hubs to entice large ISPs, these communities deserve access to high-speed internet just like any other. We are proud to have partnered with Newton County to ensure full access to their entire community."

Surf began investing in the area in 2020, starting with \$1.7M through the federal E-Rate Program to build fiber to the North Newton School District. This pivotal step not only empowered students and educators with high-speed connectivity, but also laid the groundwork for expansion in the area. In 2023, Surf completed construction of fiber internet to 322 households through Indiana's Next Level Connections (NLC) Broadband Grant Program.

To date, nearly 60 percent of the project is complete, with fiber running to almost 50 percent of households. All told, Surf will bring 1 gig internet speed opportunities to 3,839 households. Upon the completion of Surf's projects, in addition to work completed by other fiber providers, 97 percent of Newton County will be served by fiber-optic internet.

Tim Myers, Newton County Economic Development Director, praised the partnership between Newton County, the Newton County EDC, and Surf, saying "The impact of Surf's Newton County project is a critical element in offering a great quality of life for all of Newton County. It is not only instrumental in attracting and sustaining business, but it helps us attract additional residents by providing them the ability to work from home. It offers our students improved e-learning capabilities. It opens the possibility of accessing telemedicine options while enhancing manufacturing, retail, and agri-business opportunities. Ultimately, it will make Newton County a better-connected place to live, work, and play!"

- more -



In a separate bid, Surf is now applying for \$3.9M in state funding through Indiana NLC Round 4 which will increase the number of serviced locations in Newton County to nearly 100%.

The work in Newton County is part of Surf's overall commitment to build an advanced fiber-optic network serving rural communities across the Great Lakes Region of Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan. Updates on construction are available on the company's website at <https://construction.surfinternet.com/>.

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 Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois. 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 250-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>.

###