

News Release

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Greene County Awarded \$2.5 Million ARC Grant for Broadband Investment

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WAYNESBURG – The Greene County Commissioners are excited to announce a \$2.5 million Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Grant for increased broadband deployment. This award is part of a \$46.4 million package supporting 57 projects across 184 coal-impacted counties through ARC's POWER (Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization) Initiative. POWER targets federal resources to communities affected by job losses in coal mining, coal power plant operations, and coal-related supply chain industries.

“In our continual search for funding to increase service, reliability, and speed of our broadband capabilities, this is the next step, and we are grateful for this opportunity. This project is ready to start and builds on our previous successful investment in broadband, we were just awaiting the funding.” said Commissioner Betsy McClure.

Kinetic by Windstream is the industry partner and service provider of this new service capability and is contributing an additional \$2.7 million in capital investment to the project bringing the total project cost to just over \$5.2 million.

This project will provide gigabit speed broadband access to more than 767 currently underserved or unserved houses in the Graysville, New Freeport and Spraggs exchanges. These exchanges cover geographic areas larger than traditionally considered in the defined area of these towns and include all or portions of six townships: Aleppo, Freeport, Gilmore, Perry, Springhill and Wayne. Approximately 105 miles of fiber-optic cable will be installed as well as the hardware and other technical requirements offering fiber-to-the-prem service.

This is the second major investment in broadband in Greene County in as many years. Following a comprehensive feasibility study, the Commissioners successfully invested more than \$3 million in broadband service improvements to serve more than 8,300 underserved and unserved households with a combination of CARES Act Funding and Windstream capital investments. Following that success, the Commissioners applied for and received this ARC funding.

“We continue to make capital investments in the underserved and unserved areas of Greene County with details provided by the feasibility study we completed in early 2020. We continually seek additional funding sources and recently applied for nearly \$8 million through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), United States Department of Commerce. These are competitive grant programs, not Greene County tax dollars. Funding is allocated for broadband or other infrastructure improvements and will be spent elsewhere if not in Greene County.” said Commissioner Mike Belding.

NTIA's BroadbandUSA program serves communities, industry and nonprofits that want to expand broadband infrastructure and promote digital inclusion. Should the application be successful, the approximately \$8 million dollar grant will be paired with a Windstream investment of over \$6 million to bring gigabit service to an additional 2,000 homes in Greene County.

"Kinetic is proud to partner with Greene County to deliver fast, reliable broadband to residents and businesses," said Susan Schraibman, President of State Operations. "Our unmatched speed, reliability and service allow families to navigate the internet safely from home with no lag times while they work, school or stream entertainment services. Businesses ranging from small shops to large enterprises can take advantage of the fiber-backed network to deploy solutions that make their companies more efficient and profitable."

Industry partner Kinetic by Windstream also recently announced the addition of 10 new permanent employee positions in Greene County due to the increased investment, installation and maintenance requirements and the desire to bring construction crews "in house" rather than contracted employees.

Additional information can be obtained on the Greene County Commissioner's Facebook page or by calling (724) 852-5210.