



WCTEL NAMED CERTIFIED GIG-CAPABLE PROVIDER BY NTCA

Abbeville, SC (January 29, 2016) – West Carolina Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (WCTEL) was recently recognized as a nationally Certified Gig-Capable Provider by NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association, the premier association representing nearly 900 independent, community-based telecommunications companies that are leading innovation in rural and small-town America. WCTEL is the first certified Gig-Capable Provider in South Carolina. The designation was earned for WCTEL’s deployment of gigabit broadband speeds and for enabling technological innovation in the Clarks Hill, Donalds, Iva, Starr, Modoc, Parksville, Lowndesville, Plum Branch, Mount Carmel, Due West, and West Abbeville communities.

“We believe technology is the key to economic development in our region. The demand for faster Internet is becoming as critical as voice, water and power and we want to meet that demand,” said Jeff Wilson, WCTEL CEO. “This national designation further recognizes that commitment.”

As a Certified Gig-Capable Provider, WCTEL joins a national campaign to build awareness and industry recognition of community-based telecom providers that have built communications networks capable of delivering Internet speeds of up to 1 gigabit per second, which is 100 times faster than those currently available in many U.S. households. A 1 gigabit connection is equal to 1000 megabits per second.

“I applaud WCTEL for its commitment to delivering the Internet’s fastest speeds—an accomplishment worthy of much praise considering the unique and challenging circumstances small, community-based telecommunications providers operate under every day in serving some of our country’s most rural and remote communities,” said NTCA Chief Executive Officer Shirley Bloomfield. “By building a gigabit-capable network, WCTEL has not only overcome these challenges, but also shattered conventional benchmarks for broadband speed to enable cutting-edge technologies that drive innovation and promote economic development in their communities, region and nationwide.”

To achieve certification, telecommunications companies must show that gigabit technology is currently commercially available within 95% of one or more exchanges within its serving territory and that such service can be provided without new trenching or stringing new aerial facilities. This statement must be confirmed by a letter from an engineering firm or other independent source involved in the company’s network planning, deployment or operation.

About WCTEL

West Carolina Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc., a member owned cooperative, was formed in 1952 to provide basic telephone services to the unserved areas of Abbeville and McCormick counties, and the Starr and Iva areas of Anderson County, in South Carolina. Today WCTEL provides landline and wireless voice, high speed Internet, HD TV, security, home automation, and hosted business services over a fiber optic network in a four county area in western South Carolina. To find out more about WCTEL, visit www.wctel.com.

About NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association

NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association is the premier association representing nearly 900 independent, community-based telecommunications companies that are leading innovation in rural and small-town America. NTCA advocates on behalf of its members in the legislative and regulatory arenas, and it provides training and development; publications and industry events; and an array of employee benefit programs. In an era of exploding technology, deregulation and marketplace competition, NTCA's members are leading the IP evolution for rural consumers, delivering technologies that make rural communities vibrant places in which to live and do business. Because of their efforts, rural America is fertile ground for innovation in economic development and commerce, education, health care, government services, security and smart energy use. Visit us at www.ntca.org.

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