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The Post Road Foundation Announces Selection of Community Partners for Pilot Program on Digital Inclusion and Intelligent Infrastructure

The Post Road Foundation has selected partners in five communities for a national pilot program to evaluate innovative ways of integrating ultra-high-speed internet with other utility infrastructure to promote digital inclusion, sustainable resource management and economic development. The community partners selected are the Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Membership Corporation in Georgia and North Carolina, the Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op in Michigan, and, in Maine, the City of Sanford, Old Town – Orono Fiber Corporation, and a collaboration of community groups in the Downeast region, including Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative and Downeast Broadband. Funding for the Post Road Foundation program, and related research at Harvard University, has been provided by The Rockefeller Foundation.

The President and co-founder of the Post Road Foundation, Waide Warner, commended the community partners: “We are very gratified by the exceptional response to our program from a number of deserving applicants around the country, but the leadership of these initial community partners was particularly impressive. We are excited to have the opportunity to work with these communities, and our research colleagues at Harvard, to explore the potential for bringing high-speed Internet to underserved areas of America. We are also grateful to The Rockefeller Foundation for the funding that made this program possible.”

Saadia Madsbjerg, Managing Director of The Rockefeller Foundation, remarked: “We are excited about this significant milestone towards increased digital inclusion in rural communities and are grateful to the communities for taking the journey with the Post Road Foundation. To scale our innovative finance solutions and make them a reality, we need a network of partners willing to push the boundaries and set the example for the rest of the country. We look forward to the next phase of the important work of the Post Road Foundation and Harvard University.”

Senator Angus King applauded the selection of the communities in Maine. “Today’s announcement by the Post Road Foundation represents a major investment in our state’s future, and reflects the ingenuity, talent, and work ethic that define Maine people,” said Senator King. “In the 21st century economy, nearly every industry, ranging from boatbuilding and manufacturing to technology startups and financial services, relies on the Internet. There is, quite simply, no tool more vital to modern life than high speed Internet – but unfortunately, far too many rural communities are being left behind. These public-private partnerships will build upon efforts to close the digital divide in regions in Maine that are struggling with slow connectivity and advance innovative approaches to deploy smart fiber networks – two important steps that will strengthen Maine’s economy and infrastructure. The Post Road Foundation has been an ideal collaborator throughout this process, and their support will open up a new world of possibilities for Maine communities; I can’t wait to see what comes next.”

The Post Road Foundation’s non-profit, research platform bridges the gap between communities and investors by exploring ways to reduce barriers to the development, financing, and deployment of sustainable, intelligent infrastructure, particularly in places lacking 21st century communications.

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