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## News Release

For Immediate Release

### **RS Fiber Broadband Initiative Receives Million Dollar Grant**

**WINTHROP, Minn.** – The RS Fiber Cooperative fiber optic broadband initiative will receive a grant totaling \$1 million from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). DEED announced today grants totaling \$19.4 million to help 17 entities in Minnesota develop broadband infrastructure in their communities. The awards will help serve 6,095 households, 83 community institutions and 150 businesses in unserved or underserved regions of the state.

RS Fiber Board Vice-Chair Cindy Gerholz said the grant was welcome news and will help continue to move the project forward. She said, “The fact the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development is providing grants totaling almost \$20 million to help in the development of broadband services to rural or underdevelopment areas of the state, highlights the importance of these projects in Minnesota. We are very pleased to be recognized for this grant at the level we were. It really speaks to the integrity of the RS Fiber initiative. It is a significant milestone and will go a long way in helping achieve our project goals.”

DEED awarded the funding from its Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program, which Gov. Mark Dayton signed into law in May of 2014. The grants will provide up to 50 percent of the cost of developing broadband for improved high-speed internet in communities across the state.

The RS Fiber Cooperative board anticipates offering services to approximately 1,600 homes and businesses in late 2015. Upon final completion, the RS Fiber Cooperative will operate a fiber optic network for most of Sibley County and portions of Renville, Nicollet, and McLeod Counties. Over 6,200 potential customers will be able to use this high-speed fiber optic network, which will provide data speeds that can be over ten times faster than speeds offered by current service providers.