NATOA Announces Recipients of 2014 Community Broadband Awards for Outstanding Broadband Endeavors

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 14, 2014 – The National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) Board of Directors today announced the recipients of NATOA's 2014 Community Broadband Awards. Since 2007 NATOA has been recognizing exceptional leaders and innovative programs that champion community interests and broadband deployment in local communities nationwide. Recipients will receive their awards at NATOA's 34th Annual Conference, to be held in St. Paul, MN from September 29 – October 2 at the Crowne Plaza Riverfront Hotel.

"NATOA's Community Broadband Awards proudly honor the people, communities, and organizations that lead the nation in improving government and public options in broadband technology," said NATOA president Tony Perez. "These pioneers were selected based on their extraordinary efforts, achievements and innovation in community-based approaches to broadband and new technology."

The 2014 Community Broadband Award recipients are:

Community Broadband Visionary of the Year
Tom Wheeler, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for opposing state laws that prohibit or limit broadband deployment and recognizing the vital role that public and public/private broadband networks can play in bringing competitive Internet services to our communities and residents.

Community Broadband Hero of the Year
Minnesota Senator Matt Schmit and Minnesota Representative Erik Simonson for courageously authoring and championing the "Border to Border Broadband Fund" bill that passed in the Minnesota Legislature securing $20 million dollars in funding that helps remove barriers to opportunities for much needed broadband development across the state.

Community Broadband Fiber Network of the Year
The Harford Metro Area Network (HMAN) for building, developing and constructing a network in rural Maryland that will reach over 150 community anchor institutions and provide over 160 miles of high-availability, high-bandwidth connectivity that will secure the County's economic future.

Community Broadband Wireless Network of the Year
City of Wilmington and New Hanover County, NC for deploying the first TV whitespace network in 2012 that now delivers wireless broadband connectivity to dispersed remote locations and for providing broadband access at the New Hanover County Juvenile Center, police stations, and the Youth Enrichment Zone while serving as a test-bed for new equipment and radio manufacture.

Community Broadband Organization of the Year
Older Adults Technology Services ("OATS") for pioneering, developing and sustaining extraordinarily successful broadband adoption programs that have changed lives by bringing the benefits of digital technology and broadband to over 15,000 older adults who have not before found the technology accessible.

Community Broadband Projects of the Year
Martin County, Florida for creating a fiber network which supports the data, voice and video needs for the County as well as clients within the county including the Martin Unified School District, the Martin Health System, City of Stuart, Liberator Medical Supply, Town of Jupiter Island, Town of Sewall's Point, saving the County over $350,000 per year.

Oconee FOCUS for transforming rural Appalachian Oconee County into a broadband oasis by creating a 245 mile fiber network providing reliable, high capacity, redundant connections both into and out of the County, through a collaboration of community leaders including county government, local businesses, the Red Cross, and the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians.

For more information on the award recipients, the NATOA Community Broadband Awards, and NATOA's efforts to bring about a national broadband strategy that recognizes the vital and integral role of local governments, visit www.natoa.org or contact Steve Traylor, Executive Director/General Counsel at the number above.

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