



## NEWS RELEASE

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### MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION NORTHERN, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN DISTRICTS

***For Immediate Release:  
April 9, 2021***

## **Public Service Commissioners Announce East Mississippi Connect LLC Receiving Funds for High-Speed Internet Deployment**

*East Mississippi Connect LLC approved to receive \$38,600,321 for broadband expansion*

MERIDIAN, MS— The three Mississippi Public Service Commissioners announce the final approval for federal funds to East Mississippi Connect, LLC to support the deployment of high-speed internet service to customers across 11 counties served by East Mississippi Electric Power Association.

Commissioners gathered for a ceremony Friday at the East Mississippi Electric Power Association Administrative Office to issue the final documents and approval to East Mississippi Connect LLC for the release of \$38,600,321 from the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) Phase I auction. East Mississippi Connect LLC is now approved as a designated eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) and in time will deploy high-speed internet service to 13,535 rural homes and small businesses who are unserved or underserved.

“For too long, residents in rural parts of these counties have been on the wrong side of the digital divide,” Central District Commissioner Brent Bailey said. “They now stand to gain access to new state-of-the-art, high-speed internet access. This fiber to-the-home network will open up access to residents to telehealth services, remote learning for school children and remote business operations. All of which are essential to be effective in today’s society following the pandemic last year.”

“Broadband is the electricity of the 21st century and rural Mississippians deserve access just like anyone in New York, Los Angeles or Chicago. These funds will go to connect homes and businesses as an investment in the future of our families, education system, economic development and quality of life.” Commissioner Presley said. “I am bound and determine to see that the modern economy and education opportunities come to every Mississippian through a world-class broadband connection. We will not stop until the last home and the end of the last dirt road is connected.”

“High-speed internet access is a necessity if we as a state want to accomplish our goals in improving our economy, health care and education,” Chairman Dane Maxwell said. “These efforts to expand services are changing the lives of Mississippians for the better and setting the table for a more successful future. It is an honor to play a small part in this as we continue this push to connect every home across the state.”

Overall, Mississippi had a total of 21 winning bidders of RDOF funds who will potentially receive a collective total of \$495,725,799.60. More information on the RDOF Phase I auction is available at <https://www.fcc.gov/auction/904>, including complete auction results and a map of winning bids.

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#### **CONTACTS:**

##### **Rachael A. Ring**

Public Affairs Director  
Mississippi Public Service Commission  
Central District  
601-540-6611 cell  
[Rachael.Ring@psc.ms.gov](mailto:Rachael.Ring@psc.ms.gov)

##### **Lauren Ann Cobb**

Chief of Staff  
Mississippi Public Service Commission  
Northern District  
(662) 432-1141 phone  
(662) 963-1475 fax  
[laurenann.cobb@psc.ms.gov](mailto:laurenann.cobb@psc.ms.gov)

##### **Caroline Bishop**

Public Information Officer  
Mississippi Public Service Commission  
Dane Maxwell, Chairman  
Southern District  
(601) 540-5938 cell  
[Caroline.bishop@psc.ms.gov](mailto:Caroline.bishop@psc.ms.gov)

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