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For Immediate Release

Northwest Colorado Broadband Launches Open Access Network in Steamboat Springs

August 15, 2017 – On August 3, the Northwest Colorado Broadband (NCB) Board of Directors voted unanimously to approve a groundbreaking series of sixteen agreements that set up a framework for operation of a new open access broadband network in Steamboat Springs. The fiber optic network will facilitate expanded provision of ample, affordable and redundant broadband service to NCB partner entities including Routt County, City of Steamboat Springs, Yampa Valley Medical Center, Yampa Valley Electric Association and Steamboat Springs School District. In addition, excess network capacity will be available to internet service providers with the goal of encouraging competition and improving broadband service, pricing and reliability within the community.

Managed by Routt County, construction of the fiber optic network infrastructure began last fall and was completed this summer. A collaborative undertaking, the \$2.2 million project was funded in part by a State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) Energy/Mineral Impact Assistance Fund Grant (EIAF) of approximately \$748,000, and through the cash and in-kind contributions of the various project partners, including grant funding secured by Yampa Valley Medical Center and Steamboat Springs School District. For efficiency and cost-savings, portions of the network use existing underground conduit owned by partners and overhead connections on Yampa Valley Electric Association utility poles.

“By working together, NCB public and non-profit partner entities have achieved far more than could be achieved by going it alone,” commented NCB Board President Tom Sullivan. “Our organizations are the beneficiaries of significant long-term cost savings and ample, more reliable service for critical community-serving functions, and we look forward to broader community benefits as private sector internet service providers take advantage of the excess network capacity.”

The sixteen agreements approved by NCB include transfers from grant-holders/project owners to NCB of perpetual rights of use and responsibility to provide oversight of network operations and maintenance. In turn, NCB is selling service and transferring fiber optic trunk line and lateral connections to each project partner to establish the first customer base that will allow the network to be viable in perpetuity. Other agreements include contracts with Visionary Communications dba Mammoth Networks, who was selected through two competitive bid processes to provide broadband internet service to NCB and to serve as the network operator. The operator will manage and maintain the network and market excess capacity to internet service providers and other potential customers.

The beginning of network operations is an important milestone as this now lays the foundation required to achieve NCB’s goal of improved broadband service throughout Routt County and the region.

About Northwest Colorado Broadband

NCB was founded by community leaders in 2012 to address growing frustration with internet service outages, lack of affordable capacity and competition, and costs 5-10 times greater than in the Front Range. In 2014, NCB began operating a carrier neutral location, aggregating the demand of several key community anchors in a single location and procuring service at significant cost savings, with a redundant pathway. NCB’s primary mission is to increase broadband capacity, provide service redundancy, and reduce the cost of service to participating public and non-profit entities. Current board members include the City of Steamboat Springs, Routt County, Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association, Steamboat Springs School District, Yampa Valley Electric Association and Yampa Valley Medical Center.