

California Public Utilities Commission Approves \$10 Million Grant for Surfnet Communications' Three County Fiber Project

Funding addresses critical needs for Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Clara residents lacking access to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband.

MARINA, CA, USA, June 21, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The California Public Utilities Commission



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Tahra Goraya, Monterey Bay Economic Partnership President and CEO

(CPUC) has approved grant funding of up to \$10,083,005 from the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) Broadband Infrastructure Grant Account to Surfnet Communications, Inc., member of Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) and [Central Coast Broadband Consortium \(CCBC\)](#). This funding will support Surfnet's Three County Fiber Project, which aims to deploy last-mile Fiber-to-the-Premises (FTTP) broadband service with speeds of up to 1 gigabit per second (Gbps) download and 1 Gbps upload to 465 eligible locations across Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Clara counties. This project addresses critical needs in these diverse regions, where

many residents currently lack access to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband.

Founded in 2004, Surfnet is a broadband ISP dedicated to connecting California's Central Coast communities, particularly those in mountain and coastal areas underserved by major broadband carriers. Surfnet's mission includes empowering local education through donations of services and equipment to schools and community organizations. A notable example is its recent donation of high-speed internet to Building Blocks Cooperative Preschool in the Santa Cruz Mountains, which became a critical community hub during storms.

Surfnet's team boasts over 70 years of combined experience in the ISP industry. The company is locally owned and operated, prioritizing hiring from within the community and supporting local businesses.

The project contributes to the CASF program goal of providing broadband internet access to 98% of California households in each CASF Broadband Consortia region. For low-income customers and those eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Plan (ACP), Surfnet will offer low-income

broadband pricing plans for five years from the project's completion, waiving standard installation and service connection fees.

"We are thrilled to introduce the Three County Fiber project, a transformative initiative designed to provide high-speed, reliable, and affordable broadband to underserved regions within Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and San Luis Obispo counties. This project is set to serve 465 priority eligible and eligible locations, including Economically Socially Justice (ESJ) communities, which encompass low-income, rural, BIPOC, and ESL communities. Our mission is to significantly enhance the connectivity in these areas, replacing current inadequate speeds with a minimum proposed speed of 100/100 Mbps," said Ken Nye, COO of Surfnet Communications, Inc.

"This project is not just about bringing better internet; it is about bridging the digital divide, fostering economic development, and future-proofing our infrastructure to meet evolving needs," said Nye. "We hope to make significant strides in improving digital access and contributing positively to the economic and social development of these regions. We are committed to ensuring that our project meets environmental standards and leverages existing infrastructure to minimize costs and impact."

"The solutions to narrow, and ultimately close, the digital divide are within our reach but require investments of infrastructure, funding, technology, and innovation," said MBEP President & CEO Tahra Goraya. "Affordable, reliable broadband is an essential tool for connection and innovation and a catalyst for economic development. MBEP is deeply committed to ensuring that no person or region is left behind in the digital landscape."

As the leading force behind the CCBC, MBEP has been at the forefront of regional broadband initiatives to enhance ubiquitous broadband access and digital equity. MBEP provides comprehensive, project-specific support, from project conception through completion. This includes delivering detailed data analysis, technical expertise, and GIS mapping services during project formulation, guiding ISPs through the grant application process to ensure they maximize their projects' eligibility scores and resulting funding awarded, leveraging partnerships with CPUC officials and regional stakeholders to garner essential public and community support, and assisting with project management and progress reporting to ensure the successful deployment of broadband infrastructure projects.

[About Monterey Bay Economic Partnership \(MBEP\)](#): Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) is a regional member-supported nonprofit organization consisting of public, private, and civic entities located throughout the counties of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz. Founded in 2015, our mission is to improve the economic health and quality of life in the region.

[About Surfnet](#): Surfnet's mission is to provide under-served coastal and mountain communities with reliable, high-speed broadband access and computer-related services that enable local businesses, residents, and telecommuters to fully leverage the latest Internet and communication technologies for their work, study and play.

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