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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **\$8.1 million in new investment for high-speed broadband approved for 11 towns in the Greater East Grand Region**

After two years of community-based planning, Fidium Fiber has received \$8.1 million from the Maine Connectivity Authority to expand high-speed broadband services across the Greater East Grand Region. 7 municipalities and 4 communities in unorganized territories - Bancroft, Brookton, Danforth, Drew Plt, Glenwood Plt, Haynesville, Forest, Forest City, Orient, Reed Plt, and Weston - will have new fiber broadband service within the next eighteen months.

The Greater East Grand Region is a citizen-designated, cross-jurisdictional economic and community development region with communities scattered across southern Aroostook, northern Washington and remote eastern Penobscot counties. Geography, heritage, the local economy, East Grand School, East Grand Health Center, and the Danforth service center connect the people in this underserved, remote part of Maine. Additional information about the region is at [www.eastgrandregion.org](http://www.eastgrandregion.org)

“This is really the first significant regional collaboration for a complex infrastructure challenge with lots of moving parts. The broadband committee members final recommendations to the individual towns reflect their ability to balance local, financial realities with long-term economic development goals” says Dwayne Young, GEGR Broadband Committee chair.

“Fidium Fiber is excited to bring high-speed internet to rural unserved regions of Maine such as the East Grand Region because it is essential to improve the lives of citizens that live and work in these areas. Fidium has expanded fiber-to-the-premise service to more than 136,000 homes and businesses in Maine so far, and we are continuing our expansion through our own funds, and with support from programs like the Connect the Ready grant program.” Sarah Davis, *Vice President Government Relations and Wholesale Strategies*

Sarah Strickland, Interim Director for the Greater East Grand Economic Council, shares that “there have been many elements that have made the committee’s work possible including: the original community planning framework from Island Institute; the planning grant funds from ConnectME, Maine Community Foundation, Maine Broadband Coalition, Danforth, Weston, Reed Plt, Washington County TIF, and Aroostook County UT; the technical expertise provided by Mission Broadband to coordinate and analyze ISP proposals for the region; Fidium Fiber’s goal to build a new fiber network across the region; and the interest by each town’s leaders in their future wellbeing.”

The Greater East Grand Economic Council’s mission is to be a catalyst and advance the economic well-being of the people living in the region by providing economic development assistance to the widely distributed communities situated in a distressed and remote area of Eastern Maine. The broadband planning project is the council’s first major initiative to help these small communities achieve more by working together. Other goals include local small business growth, workforce development, youth and family resilience, and recreational tourism.

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