

Garrett County, MD and Declaration Networks Group Announce Landmark Public/Private Partnership to Eliminate the Digital Divide

Innovative Federal, State, County and Private Industry Collaboration Creates a Model to Accelerate Next-Generation Broadband in Rural America



OAKLAND, Md. and VIENNA, Va., Sept. 15, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Garrett County, MD and Declaration Networks Group, Inc. (DNG) have entered into a long-term agreement that establishes funding for deployment of a state-of-the art broadband network infrastructure with compelling economics to deliver high-speed Internet services to more than 3,000 unserved, or underserved homes and businesses.

The initiative was jointly developed by Garrett County and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), who have both committed grant funding to the effort. DNG was selected as the private industry partner by the County through a competitive bid process. This groundbreaking partnership provides an effective model to stimulate broadband investment for other communities to adopt across the country.

Paul Edwards, chair of Garrett County's board, said, "This partnership with DNG marks an important milestone for our County, and it will provide an immediate positive impact to the unserved and underserved residents, and a sustainable infrastructure that will benefit the region, support its economy and enrich the value and appeal of visiting and living in Garrett County."

DNG establishes broadband networks for local communities, leveraging technologies best suited for local service areas and users. Bob Nichols, CEO of DNG, said, "DNG is excited to join with Garrett County and ARC to create an innovative broadband ecosystem that will address the digital divide for families in rural communities, stimulate the local economy, and enhance the quality of life for all its citizens."

DNG will begin its network deployment later this year, leveraging existing fiber networks and unlicensed spectrum allocated by the FCC to efficiently support the use of high quality broadband services. DNG has been a leader in developing broadband networks and pioneering wireless technologies, including TV White Space frequencies which will be deployed in much of the unserved parts of the County to address the challenging mountainous terrain and heavy foliage. DNG will operate the network under the service name, NeuBeam™, providing high-speed services at very competitive prices.

While Garrett County enjoys a vibrant year-round tourism economy, strong agricultural sector and growing business community, many Garrett County residents and businesses are not able to participate in today's digital economy due to the lack of broadband infrastructure.

Earl Gohl, Federal Co-Chair, ARC, said, "ARC sees its investment of federal funds in the Garrett County broadband project as an investment that will help make Garrett County more competitive in the 21st Century Information Economy. Through this initiative, Garrett officials are creating a model which will benefit their county for decades to come and which other areas are sure to follow."

Garrett County's broadband initiatives have also been supported by a multi-year consulting contract with CTC Technology/Energy Inc. based in Kensington, MD. CTC developed the County's Broadband Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan in 2012, defining the multi-year technology plan culminating in the Public Private partnership being announced today.

Joanne Hovis, President of CTC said, "We are thrilled to have played a role supporting Garrett County, ARC and DNG in reaching this milestone, and look forward supporting the deployment of this pioneering network."

For more info about DNG, go to www.declarationnetworks.com (<http://www.declarationnetworks.com/>) and www.neubeam.com (<http://www.neubeam.com/>).

For more info about Garrett County, go to www.garrettcountry.org (<http://www.garrettcountry.org/>).

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