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## **Hundreds of rural students in Hidalgo County to receive high-speed internet**

ALBUQUERQUE – Today, the New Mexico Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) announced it has awarded a \$1.5 million *Student Connect* grant to Transworld Network LLC (TWN) to provide high-speed internet to rural students in the Lordsburg Municipal Schools District.

The grant will bring broadband through fixed wireless service to student households that currently lack reliable home internet. Participating students and school staff will also receive three years of free internet service.

“These *Student Connect* funds will change student lives in the Lordsburg area,” said **Neala Krueger**, OBAE’s state grants program coordinator. “Hundreds of students who attend Lordsburg schools can’t do homework online, apply to colleges or access learning resources when they leave school. That’s about to change.”

The grant will fund construction of wireless towers, fixed wireless infrastructure and receivers for the designated student homes in hard-to-reach parts of the Lordsburg area.

“Rural communities are too often left behind when it comes to affordable, highspeed internet,” said **Steve Lucas**, Lordsburg Municipal Schools superintendent. “We are excited to partner with TWN to bring free broadband access to qualifying families, ensuring more of our students can thrive in today’s connected world. We sincerely thank the State Office of Broadband and TWN for making this opportunity possible.”

This is the second *Student Connect* grant issued to TWN. In July OBAE awarded the Internet Service Provider \$1.5 million to connect 484 students in the Silver Consolidated School District.

The funding comes from OBAE's Connect New Mexico Fund, established in 2021 through the Connect New Mexico Act. Lawmakers appropriated \$25 million for public school projects, and OBAE created *Student Connect* program specifically designed to bring internet access to rural students and school staff. To date, OBAE has awarded 13 *Student Connect* grants to broadband providers across the state.

The Connect New Mexico Fund had also secured \$70 million for general broadband infrastructure and \$5 million for broadband grant writing, engineering and planning.

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*The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion is dedicated to serving New Mexico with a commitment to make high-speed broadband accessible to all New Mexicans. OBAE's mission is to expand and improve high-speed internet service with passionate leadership that drives bold, equitable, affordable and inclusive broadband solutions. OBAE seeks results that honor the state's rich heritage and elevate quality of life for all.*