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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **State broadband initiative bridges digital divide for rural learners**

*Grant connects 250 rural New Mexico students to high-speed internet*

ALBUQUERQUE – The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) announced today a \$2,395,072 grant awarded to Santa Fe-based NM Surf, Inc to deliver high-speed internet access to rural students and school staff.

This funding represents the latest investment through OBAE’s \$25 million *Student Connect* program, specifically addressing the critical disadvantages faced by rural students without home internet access. The nearly \$2.4 million award is expected to connect 250 rural students through the *Santa Fe Public* project.

“This project, funded by our Student Connect program, is truly a life-changer for these students,” said **Richard Govea**, OBAE’s Project Manager Bureau Chief. “We are ensuring that students across the state who are unable to access the internet at home get connected. *Student Connect* is an integral part of this connectivity that’s helping students succeed in school and in life.”

The grant will fund the construction of towers and fixed wireless service and provide receivers for designated student homes through the *Santa Fe Public* project. Participating students and staff will receive three years of complimentary internet service.

The NM Surf, Inc award marks OBAE’s 11<sup>th</sup> *Student Connect* grant, bringing total disbursement to \$21,849,010 from the Connect New Mexico Fund. More than \$3.1 million remains available. OBAE actively encourages applications from schools and internet service providers.

Projects must be completed by June 30, 2026. Applications remain open with no deadline, requiring only that proposals meet program criteria.

The Connect New Mexico Fund was established by the Legislature in 2021 through the Connect New Mexico Act.

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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.*