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Niagara-Orleans Regional Alliance (NORA) Seeks Internet Providers for High-Speed Internet in Un-served Areas of Niagara and Orleans Counties

For Immediate Release

November 17, 2014 -- ALBION, NY-- The **Niagara-Orleans Regional Alliance (NORA)** is currently evaluating proposals for delivering High-Speed Internet service to un-served areas of Niagara and Orleans counties. The original Request-for-Proposal (RFP) was the end product of an intense study that was two years in the making. The RFP invited over twenty last-mile broadband and telecommunication providers to submit proposals to provide service in areas of both counties.

NORA stakeholders, which include the Orleans County Legislature (representing all Orleans County townships) and the Niagara County Town Supervisors of Cambria, Hartland, Lockport, Newfane, Porter, Royalton and Somerset, joined together and commissioned **BPGreene and Associates** to helm the study. The study documented un-served address points in each town and those without access to affordable, terrestrial broadband Internet services.

The RFP offers respondents maximum flexibility and, "We are open to all approaches including wireline, wireless, fiber-line, as well as hybrid solutions," said **Niagara County Legislator Dave Godfrey**. He continued, "The goal is to provide our rural businesses, tourists, residents and students with Internet service that is, at minimum, equal with that of more urban areas."

Respondents were asked to quote both the local cost and conditions to meet the initiative's goals. **Orleans County Legislator Lynne Johnson** added, "Each proposal will be evaluated before a go-forward plan is pursued in order to assure that an implementation can stand on its own and requires no long-term taxpayer subsidy."

NORA then requested the Orleans Land Restoration Corporation (OLRC) use the study data to seek proposals from last-mile Internet providers. **Jim Whipple, CEO of both the Orleans County Economic Development Agency and the Orleans Land Restoration Corporation** noted, "We knew we had un-served areas but were startled to see the full scope documented so concretely. The formal study enabled us to take this next step [of releasing an RFP] with authority."

It is expected there will be some cost to incentivizing build-outs in both counties. Certain areas of Niagara and Orleans counties are un-served because population density is low in comparison to more metropolitan areas. Once the proposals are evaluated, the NORA collaborators can openly pursue funding channels. NORA's goal was to address servicing the more rural areas, agri-businesses and small businesses in Niagara and Orleans, as well as residents who have been consistently without reliable Internet.

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