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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ASTAC Awarded \$30,970,030 in USDA ReConnect Funding for North Slope Middle Mile Projects
Grant will help connect Point Lay and Anaktuvuk Pass to high-speed fiber-optic network

Anchorage, Alaska – Arctic Slope Telephone Association Cooperative, Inc. (ASTAC) has been awarded \$30,970,030 in funding for a transformational broadband project in remote Alaska. The grant will provide ASTAC with the means to expand its terrestrial network to provide customers in Point Lay and Anaktuvuk Pass with access to high-speed broadband by way of Point Hope and the Dalton Highway.

Funding is being provided through United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Rural Utilities Service (RUS) ReConnect Grant Program. Upon completion both projects will allow for high-speed broadband at or above 100 Mbps in each community. Both villages have traditionally been served by satellite bandwidth, which is prohibitively expensive, and has limited capacity and very high latency.

“We are thrilled the USDA has awarded ASTAC the funding to make a broadband transformation in the final two ASTAC service communities,” said ASTAC General Manager/CEO Jens Laipenieks. “At the direction of our Board of Directors, it has been our goal to connect all nine ASTAC markets to high-quality, terrestrially served broadband. Upon completion, Point Lay and Anaktuvuk Pass will follow Utqiagvik, Point Hope, Wainwright, Nuiqsut, Deadhorse, and Atkasuk as fully fiber-connected communities. This grant will be instrumental in achieving that goal and further closes the digital opportunity gap between remote and urban Alaska.”

ASTAC will construct and operate a broadband system to provide service of at least 100 Mbps available to residential and business customers within the proposed service areas. As part of the project, ASTAC will also replace copper plant with fiber to the roughly 261 total homes, businesses, and anchor institutions. Consistent with the goals established by the United States National Broadband Plan and the Arctic Council’s Arctic Broadband Initiative, these upgrades will provide terrestrial broadband connecting Anaktuvuk Pass to the existing Dalton fiber onto ASTAC’s central office in Deadhorse and Point Lay by way of Point Hope.

It took more than a village to make this award a reality. ASTAC would like to thank the communities of Point Hope, Point Lay, Anaktuvuk Pass, Bureau of Land Management, United States Core of Engineers,



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United States Fish & Wildlife, UIC, ICAS, NSB, ASRC and finally the USDA Rural Development Agency and RUS. Everyone's contributions included knowledge of the area, cultural insight, and environmental guidance.

ASTAC anticipates the project to begin in 2023, with a projected in-service date of mid-2025.

About ASTAC

ASTAC provides Fiber Broadband Ethernet and Internet, LTE wireless as well as local and long-distance services across the North Slope. Additionally, ASTAC offers a Nomadic WAN and Internet service using the North Slope's only private LTE network covering the oil fields. For more information, visit www.astac.net.

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