

NEWS RELEASE

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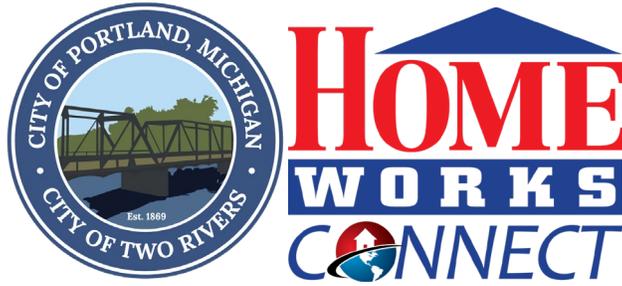
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Portland, Michigan – The City of Portland and HomeWorks Connect are announcing a partnership to revolutionize the City by bringing reliable high-speed fiber internet services to City of Portland residents, turning Portland into an elite “gigabit city.” HomeWorks Connect, a division of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, has been providing fiber-to-the-premises (FTTP) services to its rural members since 2018. The broadband internet service offered by HomeWorks Connect has been widely praised by its members as highly reliable and capable of providing the necessary bandwidth and speed for commercial, academic, and home-based business purposes.

In 2018 at the direction of City Council, the City of Portland began exploring the feasibility of offering high-speed internet services through its own electric utility. Since that time, the City has conducted years of due diligence by heavily scrutinizing various models, including owning, operating, and offering high-speed internet as a City service, which would come at a significant cost to the City residents. Throughout this process over the past five years, the City and HomeWorks Connect have remained in discussions regarding various strategies to align common interests and bring this increasingly essential service to the City, its residents, and its businesses. As a result of those discussions, the City and HomeWorks Connect have developed a plan to achieve that goal.

The City’s electric utility, the Board of Light and Power, has existing underground infrastructure and often installs additional conduit for future uses. The City and HomeWorks Connect have reached an agreement whereby HomeWorks will lease the available underground conduit to



construct a city-wide fiber network and provide their services to the City and its residents.

Portland Mayor James E. Barnes stated, “This has remained a top priority for City Council over the years – bringing reliable, high-speed broadband services to our residents and businesses. This is a game changer that will greatly enhance our community for decades to come, serve as an economic development driver, and facilitate smart city concepts. We are grateful for our partnership with HomeWorks Connect, and many thanks to City Manager Gorman and his team’s due diligence and persistence in bringing this project to fruition.”

HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative CEO Chris O’Neill added, “We are excited about this project and providing this service to our friends and neighbors in Portland. Now that the buildout of our fiber network to our membership is nearly complete, it’s important that we continue to expand our fiber-to-the-home services beyond our service territory in order to further our mission of providing reliable, cost-effective broadband services to the underserved in our local communities through our not-for-profit business model. Collaborative projects like this one with the City of Portland have great potential to benefit our entire membership, which makes this a win-win for us.”

The tentative timetable for this project is aggressive, with field engineering and construction planned to take place in the spring/summer of 2023 and customer connections occurring as early as late summer or early fall 2023. To learn more, please visit www.homeworks.org/portland or contact HomeWorks Connect at [517-647-1258](tel:517-647-1258).