



August 5, 2015

Windstream Accepts \$175 Million Annually for Seven Years to Expand and Support Broadband Services to Approximately 400,000 Rural Locations

WASHINGTON, Aug. 5, 2015 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Windstream (NASDAQ:WIN) has accepted \$175 million annually for seven years from Phase II of the Connect America Fund to expand and support broadband service to approximately 400,000 rural locations in 17 states.

Administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Connect America Fund provides ongoing funding to support and expand rural broadband networks capable of delivering at least 10 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload speeds.

"Windstream is committed to providing robust and reliable voice and broadband services to our customers," said Tony Thomas, Windstream's President and CEO. "This ongoing support supplements Windstream's substantial network investments, enabling us to continue service in many high-cost areas and to offer new service to many others."

Thomas says the company has made significant strides in expanding and improving its broadband capabilities in its rural service areas, through its own investments and universal service and stimulus funds.

Under the rules for Connect America Fund Phase II, state-by-state support levels were generated using a new FCC cost model. Companies may accept the funding and related service obligations for its service area in each state. If a company declines an offer for a state, funding will be subject to a competitive process in which any eligible provider can bid to serve all or part of the area. Windstream has declined the statewide offer for New Mexico.

"We remain focused on providing affordable broadband service to consumers throughout our New Mexico service area," Thomas said. "But the statewide offer would not enable us to meet the program's obligations." The company will instead participate in the upcoming bidding process to compete for support in the state.

The FCC created the Connect America Fund in 2011 to facilitate broadband deployment in high-cost, rural areas. This program replaces the previous universal service program that helped expand telephone networks to high-cost, rural areas. Under that program, Windstream received approximately \$100 million in annual support in 2014, which will be replaced by the Connect America Fund Phase II receipts of \$175 million each year starting in 2015.

About Windstream

Windstream, a FORTUNE 500 company, is a leading provider of advanced network communications and technology solutions, including cloud computing and managed services, to businesses nationwide. The company also offers broadband, phone and digital TV services to consumers primarily in rural areas. For more information, visit the company's online newsroom at news.windstream.com or follow on Twitter at [@WindstreamNews](https://twitter.com/WindstreamNews).

CONTACT: Media Contact:

Michael Teague, 501-748-5876

michael.teague@windstream.com



Source: Windstream Holdings, Inc.

News Provided by Acquire Media