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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MBEP Collaborates with Regional Partners for Broadband: Signing Ceremony Formalizes the Creation of the South Salinas Valley Broadband Authority between the cities of King, Greenfield, Soledad, and Gonzales and Monterey County

(Marina, CA – May 27, 2022) – A signing ceremony formalizing the Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement (JPA) between the cities of King, Greenfield, Soledad, and Gonzales and the County of Monterey to create the South Salinas Valley Broadband Authority will take place **Friday, May 27 in the Gonzales City Council Chambers**. The signing ceremony will be available to watch via zoom (**Webinar ID:** 862 8681 2461, **Link:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86286812461>) and will be streamed live on the City of Gonzales’ Facebook page.

The formation of this JPA is one of the initiatives of the Salinas Valley Five Cities (SVFC) which is focused on the well-being of the Salinas Valley and the lives of students, families, and the valley’s workforce. Monterey County Supervisor Chris Lopez has been a driving force behind creating the JPA. Key partners and collaborators include Hartnell College, the Monterey County Office of Education, Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA). Lopez's leadership at RCRC and GSCA was instrumental in establishing partnerships with these organizations and they will work closely with the JPA to design, fund, and develop the Community Broadband Network.

“Congratulations to all of our partners who worked tirelessly on this effort; special thanks to Supervisor Lopez, and City Manager Mendez for their leadership. Monterey Bay Economic Partnership believes that high-speed broadband is an essential service in today's society and should be accessible and affordable for all residents in the Monterey Bay region as we strive toward healthy communities and inclusive economies," said MBEP President and CEO Tahra Goraya. "Our organization has long worked to bring solutions that can close the digital divide and we are proud to be a partner in moving this collaboration forward.”

The JPA establishes the governance foundation that will coordinate development of the framework, establish the geographic area, invite collaboration and economies of scale, and most importantly, apply the equity lens needed to put forward compelling and competitive funding applications resulting in the ability to deliver broadband for all in South County. Partnering with RCRC and GSCA will provide the JPA access to technical assistance and financing sources necessary to deploy an open-access municipal broadband network. Initial funding for administrative support of the JPA will be provided by members of the JPA. Each of the four cities and the county have approved annual contributions of \$25,000 for three years.

[Monterey Bay Economic Partnership](#) (MBEP) is a regional member-supported nonprofit organization consisting of public, private, and civic entities located throughout the counties of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz. Founded in 2015, our mission is to improve the economic health and quality of life in the region.