



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**PROCLAMATION**

BY THE GOVERNOR

**WHEREAS**, broadband is a critical component in the ability of Tennesseans to engage advanced agriculture, economic opportunity, education, health care, employment, public safety, and other vital services; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 300,000 Tennesseans are served by more than 20 locally operated rural broadband providers who have conquered economic and geographic challenges to deploy state-of-the-art broadband internet access networks that enable their users to profitably obtain and leverage national and global connectivity for agriculture, education, commerce, healthcare and other vital services; and

**WHEREAS**, the accomplishments of these locally operated rural broadband providers have enabled Tennesseans to meet particularly the profound challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic by enabling workers to work, students to learn, patients to heal, and local businesses to remain active, vibrant and competitive; and

**WHEREAS**, these locally operated rural Tennessee broadband providers have moreover undertaken critical efforts to remove barriers to broadband participation, including the connection of thousands of school children to the internet and the deployment of focused broadband enabled telehealth facility for United States service veterans; and

**WHEREAS**, an integral aspect of local community success relies upon the active interaction, engagement, and collaboration among local leaders; and

**WHEREAS**, Smart Rural Community<sup>SM</sup> is a national initiative promoting rural broadband networks and applications to foster innovative agricultural, economic development, education, health care, other vital services; and

**WHEREAS**, Smart Rural Community<sup>SM</sup> further promotes collaborative efforts among locally operated rural broadband providers and other local leaders to identify, develop and deploy innovative broadband enabled solutions illuminating the promise, potential and possibilities enabled by rural broadband deployments; and

**WHEREAS**, the rural and urban regions of our State and Nation are bound by historic, social, and economic ties that are fortified by this abiding connectivity; and

**WHEREAS**, the continued connectivity enabled by rural broadband ensures future global competitiveness for Tennessean students, workers and producers; and

**WHEREAS**, five locally operated rural broadband providers in Tennessee have been recognized as leaders of the national Smart Rural Community<sup>SM</sup> initiative exemplifying best practices for more than 1,000 locally operated rural broadband providers throughout the Nation; and

**WHEREAS**, these locally operated Tennessee Smart Rural Community<sup>SM</sup> broadband providers represent a driving force in the continued economic resilience and prosperity of our State;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim September 22, 2021 as

*Smart Rural Community Day*

in Tennessee and encourage all citizens to join me in this worthy observance.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official seal of the State of Tennessee to be affixed at Nashville on this seventh day of September, 2021.

*Bill Lee*

Governor

*Janet Bergott*

Secretary of State