

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **HARRINGTON MILLENNIALS MAKE BROADBAND A PRIORITY**

*Harrington just turned up their broadband in a big way, making their historic business district more attractive for business development.*

Harrington has a beautiful downtown with most of its historic buildings still intact, including the turn-of-the-century Opera House. However, several of the downtown storefronts are empty. That is a problem that the Harrington Public Development Authority (PDA) has struggled with. They came to the conclusion that if they are going to attract business owners to their town they needed urban Internet capability in their rural business district.

Now two years later, there is something new in historic downtown Harrington – high speed broadband equipment purchased by the PDA; owned by the City; and capable of delivering up to a Gig of bandwidth to the buildings in the downtown core.

Harrington was one of several rural communities in Lincoln County whose libraries received high speed fiber in 2012, a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The statewide fiber project, known locally as the NoaNet project, assured that if rural communities needed high speed internet they could at least access it at the local library. The PDA believed that if their entire downtown - not just the library - had access to that fiber, people interested in getting away from the crime and the cars and the increasing costs of the big city might consider moving their business there. Knowing that Harrington was too small to justify the necessary investment from a large provider, the PDA made a deal with the library's provider to also be downtown's provider. An agreement was reached where the PDA purchased the equipment, the provider installed it, and the project has now gone live.

It is no coincidence that a town with several young leaders would recognize the importance of the Internet. Millennials are highly connected and Harrington has its share. PDA president Josh Steward is a thirty-one-year-old farmer. The Mayor, Dillon Haas, is a telecommuter in his twenties and a couple of Harrington's council members, Levi Schenk and Justin Slack, are also millennials. That's a perk of rural living - having the very real opportunity to be involved in local government, regardless of age. That is certainly paying off for Harrington.

