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City and GRU Invite Businesses to Negotiate for Broadband Services

Gainesville, FL – On March 28, 2018, the City of Gainesville and Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) issued an invitation for qualified businesses to negotiate an agreement for services that will determine the best ways to approach and implement internet broadband services to make Gainesville the “Most Connected City in America.”

Primary goal of the Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) process and the Gainesville Broadband Connectivity Subcommittee, are to lower costs and increase internet speeds for residents and businesses, and make sure everyone has access to the municipal network in designated areas. Secondary goals include providing the lowest priced gigabit service and universal free service to all residents.

The Gainesville City Commission established the Broadband Connectivity Subcommittee to explore broadband availability, affordability, performance and development opportunities in our community. The Subcommittee has reviewed a number of issues related to broadband delivery, with an emerging goal of “Expanding Affordable Internet in Gainesville”.

“Through the robust fiber-optic network currently in place, the addition of increased internet speeds and lower costs, will keep Gainesville in a unique position to reduce disparities in our community when it comes to being connected,” said City Commissioner Adrian Hayes-Santos, Chair of the Broadband Connectivity Subcommittee. “The process will also allow us to explore new ways to further develop plans for smart city applications, infrastructure and communications systems in collaboration with private firms.”

GRUCom, a subsidiary of GRU and owned by Gainesville residents, already owns almost 600 miles of the area’s only all-fiber-optic network across Alachua County. This asset serves our schools, governments and many major businesses’ internet, data transport and networking needs by providing world-wide high speed connections.

Responses to the ITN are due by the end of business on April 23, 2018. City staff will then review submitted responses from interested private companies, with the Negotiation Phase starting the latter part of May 2018. Upon City Commission approval, a contract start date may occur in early August 2018. Please note that dates are subject to change.

For more information on the ITN process or timeline, contact Clint Lockhart, Senior Buyer at LockhartCM@GRU.com or (352) 393-1250. Please direct technical media inquiries to David Warm, GRU Communications Director, at 352-393-1439. Direct other media inquiries to Assistant Public Information Officer, Chip Skinner, at skinnerc@cityofgainesville.org or (352) 393-7842.

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