

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Broadband Connectivity Reaches Indiana University Health Blackford Hospital

Hartford City, Indiana – June 1, 2012 -- Indiana Rural Health Association (IRHA) is pleased to announce a new participant in the Indiana Telehealth Network (ITN). ITN is a collaboration between IRHA and its member institutions, the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) and the Indiana Telecommunications Association (ITA). The ITN is funded through the Federal Communications Commission's Rural Health Care Pilot Program (FCC RHCPP), administered by USAC.

Indiana University Health Blackford Hospital, located in Hartford City, IN, has chosen to partner with Indiana Fiber Network for their participation in the Indiana Telehealth Network. Construction of approximately 15 miles of fiber optic cabling to the hospital will begin in the coming weeks. Construction will be completed during the spring of 2013. This project not only brings broadband connectivity to IU Health Blackford, but also creates a connection hub in Blackford County.

Kelly Dyer, CEO of Indiana Fiber Network, states, "We are looking forward to working with community leaders in Blackford County to help promote the availability of the fiber optic assets and to market the excess capacity to potential users." Executive Director of the Blackford County Economic Development Corporation Rob Cleveland noted that IU Health Blackford Hospital CEO Steven West, IU Health, the IRHA, and IFN deserved considerable thanks and praise for their work in bringing fiber into the county. Mr. Cleveland added, "This is a tremendous opportunity for Blackford County and will make it much easier to conduct and attract business to our community. From the beginning, we have received support for this project from Steven West, CEO of IU Health Blackford Hospital, and I would like to thank him for seeing the value this brings to Blackford County. We received tremendous support and funding for the project from the Hartford City Redevelopment Commission, the Blackford County Community Foundation and the Ball Brothers Foundation. I would also like to thank IU Health, the Indiana Rural Health Association and the Indiana Fiber Network for making this possible. We have substantial plans for the expansion of the fiber, and hope to provide service to each school, business and government office, along with other cities in our community. The potential impact of this announcement for Blackford County is limitless."

Don Kelso, Executive Director of IRHA said, "The Indiana Rural Health Association, along with its Indiana Telehealth Network, is very pleased that IU Health Blackford Hospital and the community of Hartford City are able to have broadband constructed to their area. Fiber and the bandwidth it provides will be critical for improved healthcare and enhanced economic development opportunities."

Indiana Fiber Network, LLC (IFN) was formed in March of 2002, whose ownership is comprised of twenty local exchange telephone companies throughout the state. They offer data center, Internet backbone, and data transport services over a state-of-the-art fiber optic network, with service available in the State of Indiana and throughout the US via a network of national carrier partners. For more information, please visit IFN's website at <http://www.ifncom.net>.

IRHA is a not-for-profit entity, subsidized by grants through the federal government, which provides various programs to critical access and rural hospitals throughout Indiana. One such program is the ITN. There are currently 24 hospitals around the state participating in the ITN. The mission of the ITN is to improve the health and well-being of Indiana residents, particularly those in rural areas, through the utilization of a dedicated broadband health network to deliver telehealth applications including, but not limited to, telemedicine, health information exchange, distance education and training, public health surveillance, emergency preparedness and trauma system development. More information on the ITN can be found on the IRHA website at www.indianaruralhealth.org under Programs/Indiana Telehealth Network.

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