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Indiana Toll Road Provides Broadband Connectivity to Northwest Indiana Schools to Enable COVID-19 Related Virtual Learning for 7,000 Students

ELKHART, Ind. – ITR Concession Company (ITRCC), the operator of the Indiana Toll Road, has entered into an agreement with Surf Broadband, LLC, a premier broadband provider in northwest Indiana, to enable virtual learning for more than 7,000 Portage Township Schools (PTS) students. As part of the arrangement, ITRCC granted Surf Broadband free access to the Toll Road’s private fiber network in August as an interim solution to support PTS’ immediate virtual learning needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In light of the public health emergency, PTS has moved to a virtual learning environment for the first quarter of the 2020-2021 school year. To meet the demand for greater bandwidth and network capacity requirements, David Lesich, PTS Director of Instructional Technology and Data Services, turned to Surf Broadband to help identify a solution.

“ITRCC and Surf Broadband came together in partnership to provide Portage Township Schools with an ideal solution that addressed our immediate need for broadband connectivity as well as preparing our schools for a dynamically changing, technology-rich future,” said Lesich.

Aware of ITRCC’s newly constructed fiber network in Northern Indiana, Surf Broadband President Gene Crusie worked with ITRCC to deliver network connectivity at a rapid pace for the start of the school year.

“Working with and connecting to the ITRCC network dramatically reduced the timeline for bringing increased bandwidth and capacity to the District,” said Crusie. “Other options we considered would have taken significantly longer to complete and would have resulted in limited additional capacity for the extreme demands of the new school year.”

ITRCC CEO Nic Barr said that ITRCC was eager to help as part of an ongoing commitment to supporting local school communities and students along the Toll Road corridor. In early 2020, the Toll Road donated over \$100,000 towards school weekend food distribution programs, providing meals for students who did not have access to school lunches during the COVID-19 crisis.

“When COVID-19 hit, we helped schools maintain and expand their school lunch programs, providing a valuable service for students. Now, as those students embrace virtual learning, we want to ensure local schools are properly equipped to serve our communities,” Barr said.

Surf Broadband will transition connectivity to the Toll Road commercial fiber network when construction is completed and it comes online later this year.

About the Indiana Toll Road

In operation since 1956, the Indiana Toll Road stretches 157 miles across the northernmost part of Indiana from Ohio to the Illinois state line, linking Chicago with the largest cities on the eastern seaboard. The Indiana Toll Road – managed by ITR Concession Company LLC (ITRCC) –

and its nearly 300 employees are proud to operate a safe and efficient roadway while providing high quality customer service to serve thousands of patrons every day. ITRCC is indirectly owned by IFM Investors, which is a uniquely-structured global fund manager with a strong track record as a responsible steward of some of the world's biggest transportation infrastructure assets.