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CLIC Announces Recipients of 2019 Local Internet Choice Awards

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 8, 2019

WASHINGTON, DC – The Coalition for Local Internet Choice (CLIC) today announced the recipients of CLIC's 2019 Local Internet Choice Awards. CLIC established its national awards to honor individuals and organizations for their extraordinary contributions to the preservation and protection of local decision-making in critical broadband infrastructure matters. These awardees will be honored during CLIC's opening ceremony on April 8, 2019 in Austin, Texas to kick off our program, [Action Plan for Local Internet Choice for 2019 and Beyond](#).

The 2019 Local Internet Choice Award recipients are:

Local Internet Choice Federal Policy Champion

Blair Levin, Gig.U – For his timely, thoughtful, persuasive, and amusing speeches and writings in support of federal policies that would preserve, protect, and, where necessary, restore local internet choice.

Local Project of the Year

Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority – For operating a financially sound, fully transparent, and state-of-the-art open-access fiber system that has been a driver and platform for robust economic development; that has caused commercial internet and data transport service prices in the region to drop by as much as 30 percent; that has attracted many new providers serving public, private and residential customers; and that has enabled businesses across all four of its member communities to report more service options than ever, allowing them to grow, thrive and compete locally, nationally and internationally.

Leadership:

Jim Baller, President | Jim@LocalNetChoice.org

Joanne Hovis, CEO | Joanne@LocalNetChoice.org

Catharine Rice, Secretary, Project Director | Catharine@LocalNetChoice.org

McKenzie Schell, Legal Advisor | McKenzie@LocalNetChoice.org

- **Local Internet Choice Local Courage Award**

Jeff Wilson, IT Director, Holly Springs – For his visionary and exemplary leadership and courage in guiding his Town on how develop a fiber to the home network after his community was bypassed by fiber movements in the region. Jeff recommended and advocated for the community to build its own fiber backbone to serve their public institutions, and this ultimately led to a private company (TING) utilizing that fiber and bringing Gigabit fast, fiber to home service to Holly Spring residents and businesses, and far earlier than the same services were offered to neighboring Research Triangle communities.

- **Public Partner of the Year**

Westfield Gas & Electric – For developing a state-of-the-art fiber network in its home town and then putting the knowledge and experience it gained to good use as the public partner in fiber projects in 20 other rural communities in Western Massachusetts. WG&E not only played a leading role in obtaining financial assistance from the state government, but it is also designing, constructing, and operating the systems. In the words of Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker, “This is big.”

- **Private Partner of the Year**

Ting Internet – For its continuing excellence as the private partner in a growing number of public-private fiber-to-the-premises partnerships in Colorado, Maryland, North Carolina, and Virginia. Ting is proving that all concerned can benefit from a visionary and well-executed business strategies that focus on helping communities meet ambitious goals driven and supported by advanced communications capabilities, that emphasizes excellent customer relations and careful cost management, and that targets reasonable profits and long-term growth.

- **Local Internet Choice Vanguard Innovator Award**

The City of Wilson – For the City's extraordinary, ongoing leadership in bringing advanced communications services and capabilities to the businesses, institutions, and residents of its community and for being at the vanguard of the development of creative, highly valuable uses of fiber networks. Among many other things, Wilson has spurred its region's emergence as an innovation economy, featuring advanced skills workforce development and the area's first Innovation Hub, called the GigEast Exchange.