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## Press Release

Steve Bowers, Media Relations Coordinator | 731.422.7459 | cell 731.616.0183 | sbowers@jaxenergy.com

Jackson Energy Authority | EPlus Broadband | EPlusTV 6 | 119 East College Street | Jackson, TN 38301 | 731.422.7500 | 731.422.7530

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Contacts: Ben Lovins (731) 422-7500  
William Wallace (703) 851-9421

## **Jackson, TN Joining National Smart Gigabit Network** **Jackson Energy Authority's Gigabit Capabilities Recognized**

**Washington, DC** – William Wallace, Executive Director of US Ignite, today welcomed Jackson, TN as the newest partner in US Ignite's "Smart Gigabit Communities" project. By investing in the infrastructure to support the project, Jackson joins 15 other communities nationwide participating in a \$6 million dollar grant from the National Science Foundation to build a living lab of testbeds for smart gigabit applications.

Jackson will benefit by developing its own applications and bringing to Jackson some of the new applications developed by 15 communities and 55 research universities also on the network.

Mayor Jerry Gist stated, "Moving to the next-stage of this initiative by connecting our fiber network to other cities nationwide accelerates Jackson's development into a globally connected commercial center."

Jackson Energy Authority (JEA) will implement the expanded program through the existing Jackson Ignite team. This team, established last year, will develop next-generation Gigabit applications to take advantage of Jackson's Gigabit fiber network.

Ben Lovins, JEA Senior Vice President of Telecommunication, noted, "Connecting to this nationwide network enables us to draw on the best ideas from communities such as Austin, Kansas City, Cleveland, and Chattanooga, while also selling Jackson's best ideas into a larger marketplace. JEA remains dedicated to aligning Jackson's gigabit infrastructure as a tool, test bed, and accelerator for economic, educational, and community benefit."

A pioneer fiber-to-the-home market, JEA has been providing fiber-based Internet services for over ten years. JEA recently announced the rollout of symmetrical Gigabit services to all of its subscribers.

“We expect JEA’s Gigabit services to play a crucial role in stimulating economic development and transforming the Jackson community by attracting new businesses and industries that have a strong need for fast, smart and symmetrical network services,” said Lovins.

Dr. Verna D. Ruffin, Superintendent of Jackson-Madison County Schools added, “Any step that enhances technology has the potential to enhance education. The potential for Jackson-Madison County Schools to have access to Gig capacity brings exciting possibilities for the expansion of our education offerings to our students and for our students.”

Bobby Arnold, President and CEO of West Tennessee Healthcare, noted, “Technology advancements in telemedicine and other areas highlight the potential to produce more effective health services. The potential of this project to enhance our medical services and for Jackson to share innovative practices with others is a special opportunity for Jackson’s medical community.”

US Ignite has organized local communities and assisted in building over 100 next-generation application profiles over the past 3 years. Each participating community receives access to a low-latency and ultra-fast network with locavore (local cloud) computing and storage capabilities that will support highly interactive and visually immersive experiences not possible on today’s commercial Internet.

Communities also receive technical assistance from US Ignite staff and partners in designing and developing applications to take advantage of the new network connections, including access to fund accelerators and technical staff. As part of their participation, cities fund and build two next-generation applications to be shared among the larger, nationwide ecosystem of gigabit cities.

Communities invited to join the program demonstrated strong support from local government, colleges and universities, non-profits, internet service providers and community anchor institutions.

The three year, public-private project knits together researchers, citizens, community organizations, technology companies, entrepreneurs, academics and federal, state and local governments to begin to build the next generation of the Internet in the United States.

Participating communities include: Burlington, VT; Chattanooga, TN; Cleveland, OH; Flint, MI; Kansas City, KS MO; Madison, WI; the North Carolina Next Generation Network (NCNGN); Richardson, TX; Utah Wasatch Front cities including Salt Lake City and Provo, UT; Lafayette, LA; Urbana-Champaign, IL; and Austin, TX.

US Ignite is a non-profit organization set up with inspiration from the National Science Foundation and White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, both of which strongly believe that it is a 21<sup>st</sup> century competitive necessity for the US to take advantage of next-generation technologies. It operates with a team supported by corporate, foundation, and community partners. Its mission is to foster the creation of 60 next-generation Internet applications – across 200 communities, like Jackson – applications that provide transformative public benefit in six sectors of the economy: healthcare, education, public safety, energy, transportation, and advanced manufacturing.