

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **COVID-19 Requires City of Gonzales to Get Creative for Internet for All Initiative Launch** *2,000 High Speed Internet Hotspots Being Distributed to Gonzales Residents*

**Gonzales, CA** – March 24, 2020 – The City of Gonzales “Internet for All” launch and distribution of wireless hotspot devices available for Gonzales residents was scheduled to take place during a Community Summit earlier this month, an event that was cancelled due to the coronavirus (COVID-19).

“With school closing and many residents in the community not having internet access at home we knew it was important to find a way to deliver the hotspots to residents, while still following the coronavirus health and safety guidelines. We had to get creative,” said City Manager Rene Mendez.

On March 20 city staff organized its first [drive-through event](#) where residents were able to quickly and safely pick up a hotspot device. Two additional drive-through events are scheduled for this Thursday and Friday March 26 and 27 from 1:00pm-2:30pm at 107 Centennial Drive. A total of 2,000 hotspots (one per household with proof of address) are available for distribution and to date approximately 1,000 have been given out. The city will continue to distribute remaining devices at prescheduled times, while maintaining safeguards to protect the community. Residents can visit the City of Gonzales Facebook page for future dates.

The Internet for All initiative is a result of a unique partnership between the City of Gonzales and T-Mobile. Through this initiative Gonzales residents can receive a 4G LTE Wi-Fi hotspot that will provide unlimited high-speed internet access and support up to 12 concurrent connections at no cost. The wireless devices are being provided to the community through T-Mobile’s EmpowerED 2.0 program.

Many families in the U.S. experience what is known as the Digital Divide, meaning they don’t have high speed internet at home. Having access to high speed internet at home allows students to complete academic studies and advance in the areas of continuing education. In addition, it provides residents access to resources such as workforce assistance, telemedicine access, and banking services, to name a few. Internet access at home empowers the entire household and helps reduce the Digital Divide. T-Mobile is investing \$504k in funds from its Digital equity EmpowerED 2.0 Award Program to address the Digital Divide.

In 2017 the City of Gonzales adopted a Broadband Infrastructure Strategy and its core goal was to provide basic and reliable internet service to every household in Gonzales. The partnership with T-Mobile and the Internet for all initiative (Broadband for All) was approved by the City of

Gonzales City Council in October 2019. The City of Gonzales is the first city on the Central Coast to provide basic level broadband service to all households.

“This initiative is one of the cornerstones of the City’s strategy to continue to improve and serve our residents and is essential for our community to thrive and be competitive in the 21st century,” said Rene Mendez, Gonzales City Manager.

In addition to hotspots, the partnership between the City of Gonzales and T-Mobile included a significant investment of funds in the city’s overall wireless infrastructure to allow for users to achieve download and upload speeds well above the FCC’s standards.

For more information contact the City of Gonzales at 675-5700.

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