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Contact: Kelly Worthington
(406) 443-6377, kelly@w-t-a.org

**WTB – Advocates for Rural Broadband
Honors Derrick Owens, Volodymyr “V” Chornodolsky, and Kristi Lee
at its 2025 Fall Educational Forum**

HELENA, MT – (October 14, 2025) – In his last act as President of WTB – Advocates for Rural Broadband, Pat McElroy (General Manager of Northeast Nebraska Telephone Cooperative) recognized three outstanding individuals during WTB’s 2025 Fall Educational Forum for their exceptional contributions to the organization and the rural broadband industry.

Derrick Owens, Senior Vice President of Government and Industry Affairs for WTB, was presented with the **Jack H Rhyner Award** (formerly known as the President’s Award). Owens has served WTB for more than 20 years, leading its Washington, D.C. office and serving as a tireless advocate for WTB members, its mission, and the rural communities they serve. His voice in Washington has elevated the concerns of rural broadband providers to policymakers at the highest levels. Through his leadership, Owens has helped shape national policy, protect the industry, and strengthen WTB’s reputation as a trusted and respected advocate.

The Jack H Rhyner Award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated great leadership and extraordinary commitment and dedication to WTB, its membership, and the telecommunications industry.

V Chornodolsky, Business Development Partner at **Nokia**, received WTB’s **Associate Member Award**, which honors a representative from WTB’s Associate Member community who has gone above and beyond in supporting WTB and its member companies.

Kristi Lee, Chief Strategy Officer of **Valley Telecom Group** (Willcox, AZ), was presented with WTB’s newly established **Foundation Award**, recognizing an individual who has provided significant support to the WTB Foundation and its mission. The Foundation’s mission is to support scholarships and foster opportunities for the next generation of leaders in the telecommunications industry.

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WTB - Advocates for Rural Broadband represents nearly 400 small, rural telecommunications carriers providing voice, broadband and video-related services in the United States. WTB’s members serve some of the most rural and hard-to-serve communities in the country and are on the forefront of bringing 21st Century telecommunications services to rural America. To learn more about WTB, visit www.w-t-a.org.