

Press Release

## **B4RN brings 400G to rural UK with Smartoptics**

**Oslo, Norway – July 12, 2023 – Smartoptics, a leading provider of optical networking solutions, today announced that Broadband for the Rural North Ltd (B4RN) has partnered with Smartoptics to upgrade its rural UK core network to 400G. The upgrade project will make the network future-proof through 2030 with flexible and cost-effective network solutions.**

B4RN was launched in 2011 to bring world-leading full fiber broadband speeds to underserved rural areas in the UK. As a community benefit society, any surplus made is put back into the communities. The rural UK Internet service provider (ISP) performs a major network upgrade every seven years. The goal is to choose future-proof solutions that will last until the next upgrade project.

Smartoptics equipment has already been deployed in the past. Building on this past success, B4RN turned to Smartoptics once again to upgrade its entire backbone network.

The upgrade project aims to support 400G in the rural core network with new dark fiber extending about 650 km creating a ring around the north of the UK between Manchester, Newcastle and Leeds. Smartoptics open line systems along with 10G and 400G optics were selected to future-proof the network through 2030.

“Cost efficiency, quality and reliability were key decision criteria for us. Smartoptics products were the best option we could find, meeting these criteria brilliantly and effectively meeting our needs for everything from 10G to 400G. We also appreciate the plug-and-play setup and ease of use. But as much as we like the products, our close relationship with Smartoptics is no less important. Smartoptics has been there for us as we continue to grow and bring greater connectivity to underserved communities,” Tom Rigg, COO, B4RN.

Distances between nodes in the backbone network range from about 40 to 100 km – typical of a rural operating environment and longer than many metro networks. Smartoptics supports rural internet service providers in meeting their needs, including these distances, and provides a 24/7 direct line to engineers for support.

“At Smartoptics we actively seek out and cater to rural providers that other optical networking vendors tend to disregard. Our cost efficiency, open values and close collaboration have been appreciated by rural providers across the UK, America and Continental Europe. We are very proud to be a part of what B4RN has accomplished, and I have no doubt that they will continue to be a source of inspiration for many, including us, going forward,” says Paul Joseph, Sales director UK & Ireland, Smartoptics.

### **For more information please contact:**

Magnus Grenfeldt  
CEO  
Smartoptics  
+46 73-366 88 77  
E-mail: [magnus.grenfeldt@smartoptics.com](mailto:magnus.grenfeldt@smartoptics.com)

## About Smartoptics

Smartoptics provides innovative optical networking solutions and devices for the new era of open networking. Our customer base includes thousands of enterprises, governments, cloud providers, Internet exchanges as well as cable and telecom operators. We have an open networking approach in everything we do which allows our customers to break unwanted vendor lock-in, remain flexible and minimize costs. Our solutions are used in metro and regional network applications that increasingly rely on data center services and specifications. Smartoptics is a Scandinavian company founded in 2006. We partner with leading technology and network solution providers such as Brocade, Cisco and Dell and have a global reach through more than 100 business partners.

For additional information about Smartoptics, please visit <https://www.smartoptics.com/>

## About B4RN

Broadband for the Rural North Ltd (B4RN) is an ISP which is run as a Community Benefit Society, we have committed to reach the hardest to reach in the rural environment. We are at the forefront of innovation and technology, and with our world class network we are competing toe to toe with the major providers.

We have been building a gigabit (1,000Mbps) fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) network since 2011. It reaches into very remote parts of rural Lancashire, Cumbria, Yorkshire, the Northeast, and Norfolk. All B4RN customers receive a 1GB connection, with symmetrical up and download speeds, no matter what the tariff.

B4RN currently has more than 12,000 connected properties and is building at pace. Our growth has been enabled through the various government voucher schemes - providing funding for each eligible property connected.

At the heart of B4RN are our volunteers who help build the network in their communities. Assisting our staff and contractors to plan the route, generate interest, secure wayleaves, dig trenches, and connect homes.

For more information please visit [b4rn.org.uk](http://b4rn.org.uk) or email [pr@b4rn.org.uk](mailto:pr@b4rn.org.uk)