



Kirtland Community College

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April 21, 2010

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Petition of MICHIGAN ACCESS, INC., CC Docket No. 96-45

Kirtland Community College strongly supports Michigan Access's application to provide telecommunication services in the unserved areas of our district. We believe telecommunication services are absolutely crucial to the long-term success and growth of our region. Kirtland Community College and Michigan Access have long shared a common vision of *enriching the lives of the people in Northern Michigan* through the application of technology to stimulate economic development and support the education, health, and safety of our residents.

As a testament to the value we place on enhancing the communications infrastructure in our district, Kirtland has in the past deployed broadcast and microwave radio systems, dial-up Internet access, and most recently leveraged our resources to encourage broadband Internet and cellular telecommunication deployments in our region. Kirtland is a founding member of the Northern Michigan Electronic Consortium whose primary purpose is to facilitate communication systems for education in our region. Such services not only support Kirtland's mission they have become essential to our ability to provide educational services.

Unfortunately, as a community and technology leader I am embarrassed to acknowledge that while Kirtland Community College enjoys the infrastructure and vision to be nationally recognized for its application of technology in education - less than a mile down the road from the college, literally, there are residents who cannot obtain basic telephone services! Even more astounding is the notion that the company who has been providing innovative wide area network and telecommunication solutions to the college and our entire district for over 10 years would be prohibited from deploying essential telecommunication services to our neighbors.

Over the past 10 years Michigan Access (DBA M33Access) has proven to be the one entity with the experience, community interest, and commitment to successfully implement large scale wide-area network and telecommunication projects with Kirtland and NMEC. When NMEC bid its network services in 2003, M33Access delivered the project on time and budget. In addition to saving consortium members nearly 1 million dollars over the four-year contract, they exceeded all expectations providing additional services, improved reliability, and double the bandwidth of our previous provider. More importantly, they have proven their commitment with subsequent contracts rebid in 2007 and again in 2009 when M33Access came in nearly \$400,000 below the next lowest *interstate* vendor.

Michigan Access has a proven track record of not just providing telecommunication services in our area - but of supporting and being supported by the communities it serves. I believe they alone will provide the best possible service to our area and at the lowest cost to our residents. Finally, Michigan Access is ready to provide this critical service immediately to residents who cannot afford to wait. I urge you to support their application.

Sincerely,

Timothy W. Scherer
Director of Institutional Services

