

*Community Advocate
Citizens Striving to be Part of the 21st Century*

March 6, 2014

**Letter – Expression of Interest
VIA ECFS**

Chairman Thomas Wheeler
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Ajit Pai
Commissioner Michael O’Rielly
Jonathan Chambers
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW 20024
Washington, DC

**Re: Expression of Interest – Rural Broadband Trials
Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90**

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioners, and Mr. Chambers,

This letter is to express the Citizens Striving to be Part of the 21st Century’s interest in participating in the Rural Broadband Trials announced at the January 30th FCC Open Meeting. While we do not have a project to propose, we take this opportunity to document our Candies Creek Road / California Lane / Tunnel Hill Road neighborhood’s need for high-speed wire-line Internet service. We respectfully ask the Federal Communications Commission to consider our area’s need when making decisions regarding the Rural Broadband Trials and any future initiatives related to the Connect America Fund.

Background

Our community is in the SW corner of Bradley County TN. The April 27, 2011 tornado destroyed many homes and other buildings (including Blue Springs Elementary School, 4832 Blue Springs Road, Cleveland TN 37311 and County Line Grocery at the intersection of Blair Road and Old Alabama Road) in our community. The rebuilding has been slow. Having high speed internet availability would probably speed the decision to rebuild. The only available Internet services are available through standard phone lines (No DSL) and wireless providers such as Verizon, AT&T and Sprint. Our goal is to have the EPB provide fiber optic broadband services to our neighborhood. This area is primarily residential with an occasional farm mixed in. A new electrical substation was installed in our neighborhood about 3 years ago that would handle residential/business growth in our area.

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Geographic Territory

Geographic Territory, Phase 1:

The terrain is a mixture of flat to rolling hills with a couple of mountain ridges on each side of our community. We are looking for fiber optic broadband which is the technology of the future. The geographic area to be served is a circle that runs along Candies Creek Road to Tunnel Hill Road to California Lane and then back to Candies Creek Road with a small run to the south on Tunnel Hill Road to include Bennett Lane to get to the fiber optic connection and to include a small portion of Blair Road and Wilhoit Drive to the east. There is about 7 miles that are not served by wire-line broadband providers with about 125 homes in this community.

Geographic Territory, Phase 2:

When other folks within Bradley County TN heard about our group meeting with County Commissioners, Volunteer Energy Cooperative and EPB officials, they were put in touch with us. We wanted to increase the geographic territory to include communities that appear to be served by Charter Communications (Per ConnectedTN.org Broadband Service Maps) but aren't. There are several smaller areas in Bradley County TN that circle Cleveland TN and do not have wire-line broadband services. The expanded geographic territory to be served is bounded by the Bradley /Hamilton County line to the west; the Tennessee/ Georgia state line to the south; Red Hill Valley Rd. to the east; and Blue Springs Church Rd-Baker Rd-Pine Hill RD to the north. The terrain in the expanded geographic territory is a mixture of flat to rolling hills.

Proposed technology

Fiber optic broadband service that would provide the options to select any or all of the following: internet (\$50-\$70 for speeds ranging from 100 Mb to 1 Gig), television (\$13-\$175 for basic channels up to all of the premium channels and HD/DVR equipment), and telephone (\$25-\$40 for basic up to unlimited LD calling).

Existing Providers

Wire-line (which is the most reliable, faster and the least costly) broadband is not available in our area. Charter Communications has for the last 30 plus years refused to provide broadband cable to many folks in their service area. The ConnectedTN.org broadband service maps are misleading because broadband cable providers can say it is available even though they are not making it available to every one in their mapped service area. We only have access to wireless, satellite or standard phone lines providers. In some cases, parts of our various communities are only ¼ a mile away from fiber optics.

Standard Phone line Providers:

AT&T: dial-up unlimited for \$22.95 per month, speed 56K

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Wireless Providers:

AT&T Mobility Wireless: LTE Mobile Share Data for Business: prices ranges from \$30 for 4 Gb to \$335 for 50 Gb, speeds range from 30-50 Mb download and 10-20 Mb upload

Verizon – HomeFusion Broadband: price ranges from \$60 for 10 Gb to \$120 for 30 Gb, speeds range from 5-12 Mb download and 2-5 Mb upload

Sprint – Netgear Zing Mobile Hotspot: price ranges from \$35 for 3 Gb to \$80 for 12 Gb, speeds range from 6-8 Mb download and 2-3 Mb upload

Several other minor wireless providers: T-Mobile USA Inc

Satellite Providers:

HughesNet – Gen4 Plan: price ranges from \$40 for 10 Gb to \$130 for 40 Gb, speeds range from 5-15 Mb download and 1-2 Mb upload

Dish Network – Dishnet: price ranges from \$40 for 10 Gb to \$70 for 15 Gb, speeds range from 5-10 Mb download and 1-2 Mb upload

Several other minor satellite providers: Skycasters, Spacenet, Inc. and ViaSat, Inc.

Wire-Line Providers:

Charter Communication refuses to run cable to provide broadband to all of the residence in their service area.

ComCast Cable Communications services some of Bradley County TN but not our community and cannot provide wire-line broadband to us because it is Charter Communication's service area.

EPB is listed as a wire-line broadband provider in Bradley County TN. This is only the case where they also provide electricity to the home. State laws do not allow them to provide broadband outside of Hamilton County TN. There are 2 TN bills: Senate Bill 2562 and House Bill 2482, if passed, would allow EPB to work with municipalities and electric cooperatives in the TN counties that border Hamilton County TN to provide fiber optic broadband services.

Local or Tribal Government Participation

Red Clay State Park the site of the last seat of the Cherokee national government is about 5 miles from our neighborhood.

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List of Anchor Institutions

Schools: College students who live at home need high speed broadband access for completing homework assignment and to take tests.

Libraries:

Healthcare: Several MDs live in our rural neighborhood that need to access electronic patient records and scan results when called at home at off-hours. Names and addresses will be provided if we are considered for FCC funds

Local Governments: Bradley County government & Mayor

Community Centers: Red Clay Pickin' Barn, 1095 Weatherly Switch Rd SW, Cleveland TN 37311, Flint Spring Ruritan Club, Red Clay State Park, 1140 Red Clay Park Rd SW, Cleveland, TN 37311

Fire Departments: Bradley County Fire Maroon Branch, 4070 Lead Mine Valley Rd SW, Cleveland TN 37311, Valley View Fire Department, 2085 Keith Valley Rd SE, Cleveland, TN 37323

Family Farms: Several family farms in rural Bradley County. Names and addresses will be provided if we are considered for FCC funds.

Home Schooling Families: Several families home school their children that live in rural Bradley County. They need to provide instructional videos that really need high speed broadband access. Names and addresses will be provided if we are considered for FCC funds.

Thank you for considering our Expression of Interest in your decisions about the amount of funding that will be allocated in the Rural Broadband Trials. We commend you in this effort to connect rural communities and are ready to help you close the digital divide.

Sincerely,



Richard W. Thornton
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