



Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission

March 7, 2014

Subject: Expression of Interest - FCC Rural Broadband Experiments

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The Region 10 League for Economic Assistance and Planning represents economic development efforts in six counties and 17 communities in western Colorado. We do not provide broadband service but we recognize the critical nature of broadband in economic development. We are currently in the process of marshalling resources to develop a regional broadband strategic plan and to use that plan to spur broadband development. To that end, we are very interested in the FCC rural broadband experiments.

The western slope region of Colorado is one of the most difficult areas in the nation in which to deliver broadband. We are a very rural area of extremely low density in a difficult mountain terrain. We believe we can work with other regional organizations to develop some innovative strategies and we hope to be able to find resources to implement them. Our member governments have expressed some interest in using regional economic development funds to spur broadband improvements. The State of Colorado has also demonstrated interest in providing some funding for regional broadband development efforts. We would like to organize local, state, and federal funding to maximize efficiencies in broadband development spending in our region.

Until the FCC has established the parameters of the rural broadband experiments program, we will have difficulty defining specific programs we would like to implement. We can foresee projects that spend tens of thousands of dollars to close gaps in existing provider infrastructure, projects that spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to extend infrastructure to community anchor institutions, or millions of dollars to extend services to currently unserved and underserved businesses and residents throughout the region.

Our primary hope in submitting an expression of interest in the FCC Rural Broadband Experiments is to encourage the FCC to structure a program with

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Town of Cedaredge
Town of Crawford
Town of Hotchkiss
Town of Paonia

Gunnison County
City of Gunnison
Town of Mt. Crested Butte
Town of Crested Butte

Hinsdale County
Town of Lake City

Montrose County
City of Montrose
Town of Naturita
Town of Olathe

Ouray County
City of Ouray
Town of Ridgway

San Miguel County
Town of Telluride
Town of Mtn. Village
Town of Norwood

sufficient scope, variety, and flexibility. If the rural broadband experiments program constrains opportunities by focusing efforts on incumbent providers like the initial rounds of CAF funding have done, the FCC will lose the opportunity to engage with local community leaders who are anxious to help solve the problem of rural broadband; if the program focuses its selection criteria and performance measures on only the number of new homes served (i.e., extending reach), the FCC will lose the opportunity to encourage local rural service providers and government entities to improve broadband by increasing capacity, reducing price, and improving reliability.

Sincerely,
Michelle Haynes
Executive Director
Region 10 Economic Assistance and Planning