

***The Dannon Project – Calhoun County Office  
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*March 7, 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 Dannon Project’s – Calhoun County Office and The City of Hobson City, Alabama’s interest in participating in the Rural Broadband Trials announced at the January 30<sup>th</sup> FCC Open Meeting. While we do not have the specific request for our proposed project, we take this opportunity to document our Hobson City AREA’s need for high-speed Internet service. We respectfully ask the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) 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**

*Provide background information about your community: Name, location, economic history, Internet services currently provided, and goals for the future.*

According to U.S. census of 2010, there were 771 people, and 242 families residing in the town of Hobson City, Alabama. The population density was 802.8 people per square mile (311.0/km<sup>2</sup>) per the 2000 U.S. Census. There were 415 housing units at an average density of 379.5 per square mile (147.0/km<sup>2</sup>). The racial makeup of the town was 6.15% [Whi](#)

## *The Dannon Project and The City of Hobson City, Alabama*



The Dannon Project

One mission...One life at a time



te, 92.71% [Black](#), 0.23% from [other races](#), and 0.91% from two or more races. 0.57% of the population were [Hispanic](#) or [Latino](#) of any race.

There were 363 households out of which 30.0% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 26.2% were married couples living together, 35.3% had a female householder with no husband present, and 33.1% were non-families. 29.8% of all households were made up of individuals and 10.5% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.42 and the average family size was 2.99.

In the town the age distribution of the population shows 28.6% under the age of 18, 8.2% from 18 to 24, 29.0% from 25 to 44, 23.0% from 45 to 64, and 11.2% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 35 years. For every 100 females there were 76.0 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 71.3 males.

The median income for a household in the town was \$17,589, and the median income for a family was \$20,368. Males had a median income of \$21,667 versus \$19,583 for females. The [per capita income](#) for the town was \$8,992. About 30.7% of families and 30.2% of the population were below the [poverty line](#), including 42.7% of those under age 18 and 15.5% of those age 65 or over.

According to Town Hall records, much of the area now included in the corporate limits of the Town of Hobson City was once within the City of Oxford, Alabama. During the late 19th century, the area was known as Mooree Quarter. The black vote from that area was a controlling factor during municipal elections. An account provided by an early settler of the community has been passed down through the years. In that account, a black person was elected as Justice of the Peace. As a result and in keeping with campaign promises, an Oxford mayor went to the state capitol and had the corporate boundaries of Oxford redrawn to exclude Mooree Quarter and the black vote. Approximately three years later on August 16, 1899, the Town incorporated. Records from an Alabama newspaper, "The Peoples' Journal", described the municipality as "the only municipality controlled and governed entirely by colored people anywhere in the United States". The newspaper further commented that "The whole country will doubtless be interested in the result of this experiment". Under the leadership of the first mayor, S. L. Davis and the first police chief, James Duran, police protection was restored to the area. The Town was named after [Richmond P. Hobson](#), a white Naval hero and member of congress. More than a century has passed since incorporation. The Town recently had buildings placed on the historic register and is currently in the process of qualifying other buildings as well. During November 2008, Alberta C. McCrory was sworn in as the 2008–2012 Mayor and continues to serve as Mayor today. Mayor McCrory's vision for the City of Hobson City includes building restoring many of the blighted areas in town, building capacity and infrastructure in the town to attract new businesses for economic development and growth.

The Dannon Project is a 501c3 nonprofit organization established in 1999 when a former slain member of Hobson City was killed by another resident of Hobson City at the tender age of 17. Dannon Pruitt was killed by someone that had been recently released from prison on a nonviolent offense that found himself struggling to assimilate back into the community post incarceration. The agency was formed by Dannon Pruitt's oldest brother and his wife to address and reduce barriers like the ex offender responsible for murdering Dannon. The agency has provided services to over 5,000 individuals including non violent pr



eviously incarcerated persons, young and parenting parents ages 16-24, at risk youth, persons experiencing or at- risk of homelessness. Services include case management, occupational training and certifications, vocational and educational services, substance abuse and mental health counseling, court advocacy, life skills, job readiness, housing, career placement, and wraparound supportive services. As such, The Dannon Project decided to expand its operations from Birmingham, Alabama to Hobson City to offer those same services and more to reduce barriers in that community as well which is where Dannon's story originally began and thus tragically ended.

In order for The Dannon Project to thrive there, it must respond to the more immediate needs of the community including offering after school tutoring programs and homework assistance to the students in the area. It also must meet the ever growing needs of high school drop outs by offering a dull learning that will ultimately lead to them taking their GED exam so that they can pursue better jobs and careers. Also we need to consider the needs of the senior and retired community. Many of the residents are retired seniors willing to volunteer which is what The Dannon Project would need to offer the immediate need services due to a void of funding for paid positions. However a majority of the retirement community residents lack robust computer and Internet skills which could be solved with the help of broad band technology there. The Dannon Project invested in 10 station brand new computer lab in December 2013 and is willing to share with the community for all of the stated purposes but we need the technology infrastructure in place for that to happen

Internet Services recently provided to the newest business in the City, The Dannon Project Calhoun County Office which is also co-located in the City of Hobson City Office Complex located at 715 MLK Drive, Hobson City, AL 36201 was provided by ATT at 18 mega bytes.

Goals for the future include The Dannon Project and the City of Hobson City developing a technology plan for the City of Hobson City which will include the details of the technology needs of the citizens of Hobson City. We desire to work with the FCC to establish broadband services to the entire city of Hobson City, Alabama which is 1.1 square miles.

•  
**Geographic Territory**

*Describe the geography of your area and what type of technology/service would best serve this geography. Be explicit in naming the geographic areas you would like to see connected.*

Hobson City is located at 33°37'6.589" North, 85°50'36.330" West (33.618497, -85.843425)<sup>[1]</sup>. According to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), the town has a total area of 1.1 square miles (2.8 km<sup>2</sup>), all of it land. We desire to expand broadband service to the entire 1.1 square miles of Hobson City, Alabama.



## Hobson City



[Map it!](#)

Hobson City is located in [Calhoun County](#) just south of the city of [Anniston](#). At its founding in 1899, Hobson City was the only municipality governed entirely by African Americans in [Alabama](#). It was named for naval hero [Richmond Pearson Hobson](#) of the Spanish-American War.

### Early History

Hobson City began existence as part of the town of [Oxford](#) just south of Anniston. Oxford was incorporated in 1852 as a [railroad](#) center. By the 1880s, Oxford had become a recreational destination and was home to Oxford College. After Emancipation, the African American population was relegated to a section of Oxford known as Mooree Quarter. Because the residents of the community were permitted to vote in city and county elections, Oxford's white population soon sought to remove their sometimes decisive influence over city elections. According to local sources, in 1899, Oxford's mayor petitioned the state government to redraw the corporate boundaries of the city to exclude Mooree Quarter after an African American man was elected as a justice of the peace. On July 20, 1899, the 125 African American citizens of the excluded section petitioned the county court to incorporate as Hobson City.



Hobson City

When the town was officially incorporated on August 16, it was only the second municipality in the United States governed entirely by African Americans (the first being Eatonville, Florida, childhood home of [Zora Neale Hurston](#)). The first school, the Hobson City and Oxford Academy, was founded in 1905. The town benefited from the industrial boom in nearby Anniston with the rise of the steel industry, and by the mid-twentieth century, Hobson City had a population of 1,500 as well as numerous businesses. With the decline of the steel industry in Alabama in the second half of the twentieth century, the town has suffered from very high [poverty](#) rates and decreasing population. In 2010, the Alabama Historical Commission declared the town one of Alabama's "Places in Peril."

### Demographics



According to the 2010 Census, Hobson City had a population of 771. Of that number, 85.9 percent of respondents identified themselves as black, 12.6 percent as white, 1.3 percent as Hispanic, 0.8 percent as two or more races, and 0.4 percent as Asian. The town's median household income, according to 2010 estimates, was \$29,759, and the per capita income was \$12,239.

## **Employment**

According to 2010 Census estimates, the work force in Hobson City was divided among the following industrial categories:

- Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services (18.8 percent)
- Manufacturing (16.5 percent)
- Educational services, and health care and social assistance (14.3 percent)
- Retail trade (11.4 percent)
- Public administration (11.0 percent)
- Wholesale trade (9.2 percent)
- Professional, scientific, and administrative and waste management services (6.6 percent)
- Transportation, warehousing, and utilities (6.3 percent)
- Information (2.9 percent)
- Construction (1.5 percent)
- Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing (1.5 percent)

## **Education**

Hobson City is part of the Oxford City Schools. The Ayers Campus of Gadsden State Community College is located less than two miles to the east.

## **Transportation**

Although no major roads run through Hobson City, it is bordered to the southeast by U.S. Highway 78 and Interstate 20, both of which run east-west. The town is bordered to the east by U.S. Highway 431. Anniston Metropolitan [Airport](#) is located approximately three miles to the south.

## **Proposed technology**

*State the technology and speed would you like to see in your community. Include the ideal cost to subscriber if possible.*



We will develop a Technology Plan for the City of Hobson City with technical assistance from the FCC which will detail the specific technology and speed detailing subscriber costs associated with achieving the technology plan for the city.

### **Existing Providers**

*List the existing providers (if any) in your geographic area. Include the speed, price, and services they offer and state why these services do not meet the needs of your community. If there are no providers, mention it.'*

ATT, Cable One and Verizon are the only local providers of high speed service in the Hobson City, Alabama community. The service options in Hobson City, Alabama with the two current providers are:

### **AT&T**

Types of Services - U-Verse internet

Cost - \$60 per month

Speed - 18 mega bytes

May have to get multiple 18 mega bytes in order to have good strength of signal

### **Cable One**

Types of Services - Operate broadband residential internet and cable services

Service - residential internet (do they offer commercial also) is internet the only service

Cost - \$35, \$50, \$75, \$100

Speed - 15 mega bytes (\$35)

5.0 mega bytes (\$50)

6.0 mega bytes (\$75)

7.0 mega bytes (\$100)

### **Verizon**

Types of Services – Broadband Cellular data

Costs - \$50, \$80, \$120

Speed - 5gb \$50

10gb \$80

20gb \$120

### **Next Wave.org –**

High Speed Internet in Hobson City, AL

**Finding the Best High Speed Internet Providers and Services in Hobson City, AL**

Anyone in the market for high speed internet services in Hobson City, AL will quickly discover there are more options to choose from than in the past. Each service works in various ways and each have their own individual benefits. Read on to learn more about your high speed internet connection possibilities in Hobson City and how to quickly get the best internet deals in your city.



## **Find Cheap High Speed Internet in Hobson City the Easy Way**

Don't waste time searching site after site for high speed internet deals when we are able to do all of the work for you. In a few simple steps you'll be able to find every available offer in Hobson City, AL, compare providers and costs side by side and even order installation.

Start now – call the toll free number above to speak to a knowledgeable representative or enter your address in the safe search form to compare offers.

## **Hobson City High Speed Internet Access - Understanding Your Options**

### **Cable High Speed Internet Service in Hobson City**

Cable internet is among the several forms of high-speed internet service that Hobson City consumers can decide to utilize. Cable high speed internet functions by sending data from your cable provider to your cable modem in your home. In order to avoid any disturbance the information is transmitted using a specific channel. The cable modem catches the signal and brings it to your computer which in turn enables you to access the web.

Cable internet provides a constant, broadband connection that's just as fast as that of a [cable TV](#) connection. Beyond speed the main advantages of [cable internet](#) service include dependable connection that's not as susceptible to interferences and easy installation that needs little additional equipment.

Major providers of this type of high speed internet service include [Comcast Cable](#), [Time Warner Cable](#), and Cox Communications.

### **Hobson City Satellite High Speed Internet Service**

Satellite high speed internet, unlike [cable internet](#), doesn't work using cable lines or telephone lines. Rather, a satellite dish attached to the home acts as the data transmitting conduit. Installing [Satellite high speed internet](#) typically includes a satellite dish, plus two modems and connecting cables.

Data signals are transmitted from the satellite internet provider to the orbiting satellites, which are then passed along to the subscriber's satellite dish, that is linked to the computer via the connecting cables and router.

Satellite internet provides high speed internet access to people that live in rural communities in and around Hobson City which might be too far removed from a cable or telephone station to get broadband internet access in any other form. Several of the other advantages of [Satellite high speed internet](#) include the format that the information is transmitted, w



high is compressed, and enables more users to be served by just one satellite at any given time. Satellite modems are also faster than standard modems.

[Dish Network](#) and [AT&T](#) are two top rated [Satellite high speed internet](#) providers that provide millions of people with reliable services.

### **Hobson City DSL High Speed Internet Service**

DSL, or Digital Subscriber Line, high speed internet, functions by sending data through phone lines. Though this is the same method used by dial-up internet, [DSL high speed internet](#) often supplies a faster connection (subject to your location) because it runs on a higher frequency that's faster than dial-up.

Like the satellite and [cable internet](#) services in Hobson City, AL, this service requires a modem that's connected to the hub, or DSL main office. The internet connection starts at this office and the modem in the user's home receives it. [DSL high speed internet](#) is fairly effortless to setup because it can be installed with the phone line that users currently have, and does not call for any extra wiring. Users can also make and receive telephone calls while online if necessary.

[AT&T](#) is additionally known for their outstanding [DSL high speed internet](#) services.\*\*

### **Fiber Optic High Speed Internet Service in Hobson City**

[Fiber Optic high speed internet](#) is the newest option for obtaining broadband internet in the home. This service functions by sending a signal produced by lasers via a fiber optic cable, which is linked to an Optical Network Terminal. The Terminal converts the signal into one your pc can interpret.

An important benefit of using fiber optic high speed internet is that it's much quicker than even [cable internet](#), and is not adversely troubled by varying weather conditions. Fiber optic cabling has been found to be more reliable, durable and secure than other internet cabling options, which has led more providers to start investing in the technology.

If you want high speed internet that's 100% fiber optic Verizon FiOS is your only option. However, Comcast and [AT&T](#) both offer high speed internet that's partially fiber optic.

### **Compare Hobson City High Speed Internet Providers and Prices for BIG Savings**

Want to get the best high speed internet deals in, Hobson City, AL? Naturally you do, and we will help you find them. Using sophisticated search-and-compare technology from Saveology.com. This offer saves you time and money by quickly locating every available offer in your city so you don't have to.

All you have to do is determine which Hobson City high speed internet provider and plan is ideal for your budget. With all of your options all in one place you can be confident you're getting all you need at a price you can afford.

### **Local or Tribal Government Participation**

The City of Hopson City, Alabama is the community advocate for this broadband opportunity. The City will work with The Dannon Project Calhoun County Office located at 715 M.L.K. Drive Hobson City, Alabama 36201 to bring enhanced high-speed internet to Hopson City, Alabama.

### **List of Anchor Institutions**

*List the anchor institutions (schools, libraries, hospitals, community centers, etc.) in your community that you want to see connected.*

**Schools:** The Hobson City Head Start Program located at 715 M,L.K Drive, Hobson City , AL 36201 would be a recipient of the enhanced high speed technology services.

**Police Department:** 610 M.L.K. Drive, Hobson City, AL 36201 (service now contracted out)

Type: Public Safety

Broadband Service: Unknown

Technology Type: Unknown

Subscribed Speed Range: Not Described

Distance: 0.08 miles

Source: National Broadband Map

**Libraries:** The Hobson City Library located at 600 M.L.K. Drive, Hobson City, AL 36201 would participate as a recipient of the high speed services.

**Healthcare:** Health Services Center Inc, located at 608 MLK Drive, Hobson City, AL 36201 would be a participant in the project.

### **Community Centers:**

The Sable Community Center located at 711 Church Street, Hobson City, AL 36201 would be a participant in the enhanced broadband project.

The Senior Citizens Center located at 600 M.L.K. Drive, Hobson City, AL 35201 would be a participant and recipient of the high speed services.

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,

*Kerri Pruitt, MBA*

*The Dannon Project and The City of Hobson City, Alabama*

Kerri Pruitt, MBA  
Executive Director, The Dannon Project  
Tamar Heard, Site Coordinator/Case Manager  
The Dannon Project – Calhoun County Office  
Hobson City, Alabama



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