



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 Experiments
Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90**

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioners, and Mr. Chambers,

This letter is to express Kent County Government’s interest in participating in the Rural Broadband Experiments announced at the January 30th FCC Open Meeting. Given the brief time frame to respond, we do not have a specific project to propose, we take this opportunity to document our County’s need for high-speed 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

Name and location: The County of Kent in the Province of Maryland.

Economic History: See Attached (KentBEF.pdf)

Internet Services Currently provided: In our municipal areas Kent County has a cable provider, Verizon DSL, dial-up and WISPs. Wireless services are the predominate source of connectivity in our rural areas.

Goals for the future:

- Connect all anchor institutions – (See Anchor Institutions Section Below)
- Extend broadband services to small business and residences in underserved rural areas
- A modern, desirable business environment requires reliable access to electricity, water and wastewater services and high speed internet. We want to extend high speed service to underserved areas currently zoned for commercial development



- Due to the rural nature of Kent County, many of our students reside in underserved or non-served areas. The Board of Education has subscribed to new technology, including web-based services and digital textbooks. The roll out of these services is being held up because of the disparity of broadband access that creates an equity issue to both students and teachers.
- To create a VoIP / data sharing communication system enabling a live presence to all public safety entities throughout the county during Emergency Operations Center activations.

Geographic Territory

Geography:

- flat,
- farming communities
- forests
- waterways

Types of Technology best suited for our geography:

- aerial fiber optics (pole fixed)
- buried fiber optics
- wireless connectivity

Specific Geographic areas – Priority Funding Areas, Rural Residential, Community Residential, Critical Area Residential, Villages, throughout the entire county. See attached map of Kent County illustrating these areas.

Proposed Technology

Fiber Optic connectivity is optimal. Fiber to the Home (FTTH) is desired, but if that's not possible then a combination of fiber and wireless, using technology such as Ubiquiti Air Fiber could work.

We would like to see a minimum of 20Mbps down per subscriber and 10Mbps up. We desire a standard cost of \$29.99 but believe means based tiers may be necessary for our disadvantaged communities.

Existing Providers

Rural areas: Satellite, WISPs, Dial-up services are the major providers, but depending on geography and local landscape, even some of these services are not available.

- WISP
 - Residential: 4Mbps down & 2 Mbps up - \$63.19.
 - Business: 4Mbps down & 2 Mbps up - \$125.24.



Municipal areas: Cable Provider, WISP, DSL, and Dial-up. Of these, the providers that meet the minimum download/upload speed requirements charge the following:

- WISP
 - Residential: 4Mbps down & 2 Mbps up - \$63.19.
 - Business: 4Mbps down & 2 Mbps up - \$125.24.
- Cable
 - Residential: 5 Mbps down and 1 Mbps up - \$42.99.
 - Business: 15 Mbps down & 1 Mbps up - \$79.99.

Local or Tribal Government Participation

Kent County Government.

List of Anchor Institutions

Emergency Services:

- Kent County EMS
- Galena EMS Station
- Rock Hall EMS Station
- Kent and Queen Anne's Rescue Squad
- Betterton EMS
- Millington EMS

Police:

- Chestertown Police Department
- Rock Hall Police Department

Firehouses:

- Galena
- Millington
- Betterton
- Rock Hall
- Chestertown
- Kennedyville

Libraries:

- Galena Regional Library
- Chestertown Regional Library

Healthcare:

- Kent County Health Department
- Chester River Hospital



City offices:

- Galena Town Hall
- Betterton Town Hall
- Chestertown Town Hall
- Kent County Court House

Community Centers:

- Millington Recreational Center (County Parks and Recreation)
- Rock Hall Recreational Center (County Parks and Recreation)
- Rock Hall Civic Center (Rock Hall Municipal)

Public Services:

- Nicholson Transfer Station
- Tolchester Water and Wastewater Treatment facility
- Fairlee Water Treatment
- County Fairgrounds

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ernest Crofoot", is written over a horizontal line.

Ernest Crofoot
County Administrator/County Attorney
County Commissioners of Kent County