



# COUNTY of McHENRY

McHENRY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER  
2200 NORTH SEMINARY AVENUE  
WOODSTOCK, IL 60098-2637  
815/334-4226

PETER B. AUSTIN  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

March 7, 2014

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

**RE: Expression of Interest for FCC Rural Broadband Experiments**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Please accept this letter as an enthusiastic expression of interest for the FCC Rural Broadband Experiments opportunity. I understand that the FCC is in the process of gauging the level of interest in this program, and please know that McHenry County, Illinois needs such a program and is very well positioned to utilize the assistance.

**Background:** Although McHenry County is considered part of the Chicago metropolitan area, significant portions of the County remain rural. In 2010, collaboration between McHenry County, the McHenry County Council of Governments and the McHenry County Economic Development Corporation occurred to engage in a countywide broadband/fiber study. Northern Illinois University's (NIU) Regional Development Institute was engaged. The objectives of the study were to implement strategies, options and practical procedures which will allow for the cost-effective implementation of improved broadband services via fiber optic networking within McHenry County.

In February 2012 the McHenry County Information Technology Department was contacted by representatives from the Illinois Century Network (ICN) regarding their state-wide project to provide high-speed internet fiber to state community colleges as identified in a \$96 million Federal Grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The ICN project to connect McHenry County College is an integral component of the NIU route plan, hence the desire to be involved in amending the route.

Presently, in March 2014, McHenry County Government, in collaboration with the City of Woodstock and School District 200 distributed a Request for Proposal to build a dark fiber backbone from the ICN project terminating at McHenry County College to the County Administration Building located on the north end of the City of Woodstock. This backbone creates opportunities for the City of Woodstock and

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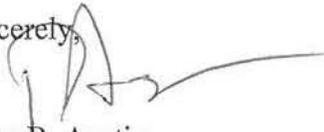
District 200 to enhance their capabilities, as well as support disaster recovery/backup capabilities for the county.

**Opportunity:** McHenry County would like to use this FCC Rural Broadband Experiment to build off this new fiber backbone and develop a public/private partnership which will expand access to high-speed internet fiber in the north and western sections of the County. The County anticipates coordinating and partnering with a private provider to incent the extension of service into areas of the County that have no internet fiber connectivity, along with areas that have a low rate of connectivity which comes at a very high cost.

McHenry County will supplement the information in the Expression of Interest as our discussions with private providers mature.

I thank you for the opportunity to participate in the FCC Rural Broadband Experiment program. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter B. Austin", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter B. Austin  
County Administrator  
McHenry County, Illinois