

Art S. Bobian, Chairman  
Ray Garcia, Commissioner  
Max Vezzani, Commissioner



## Board of County Commissioners

March 7, 2014

Federal Communication Commission  
Rural Broadband Experiment Expression of Interest

In response to the FCC Next Generation Network experiment, Huerfano County in cooperation with the Spanish Peaks Regional Health Center hereby submit this Letter of Interest. Census Tract 8055 is both an Eligible High Cost Location and Extremely High Cost Location as listed in the Experiment Eligible Locations spreadsheet. Huerfano County has also been invited to participate as a Promise Zone under HUD and USDA.

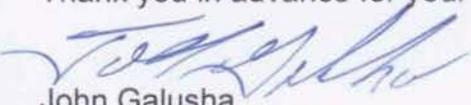
Huerfano County is very rural in character, mountainous, and sparsely populated outside the City of Walsenburg and the Town of La Veta. The Spanish Peaks Regional Health Center is a Level 3 trauma center for the area and relies heavily on high speed internet access and telemedicine. The incorporation of Affordable Care Act requirements into the budget of the hospital severely restricts their ability to deliver satellite health services. Having higher speed bandwidth is a necessity for operating a clinic in any of the remote areas of the County.

The economy in Huerfano County is dismal with little hope on the horizon. One component of the economy that has a potential to reverse the downward spiral and stabilize the tax base is the "Lone Eagle" technology worker. Huerfano County has magnificent vistas and draws a significant population of second home owners. Connectivity is the primary utility that prevents technology professionals from becoming residents.

The combination of providing access to quality health care and attracting high quality residents is dependent on speed. We have dial-up and satellite service, and high speed to the libraries and schools, but do not have the speed to satisfy the need beyond the town centers.

We propose a series of microwave towers that could overcome the terrain challenge without the high cost of installing fiber up every driveway in the county. The scope of the project and all the partners involved is not yet known but discussions have begun to develop a specific scope for the project and the responsibilities of all partners. We anticipate this to require a significant initial investment and possibly small injections until it is fully utilized.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

  
John Galusha  
County Administrator