

March 07, 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 Firenet1.com interest in receiving funding from the Rural Broadband Experiments announced at the January 30th FCC Open Meeting.

Background

Firenet1.com was an idea and an interest shared by our owner in 2000. He lived in a rural part of Desoto County Mississippi and knew with the internet the world was at your fingertips. At that time we had access to 42,000kb dial up. When he had a vision of what “high speed” would mean to home owners in the area. He invested in a company who went bankrupt. Not being deterred he purchased a tower and had this tower constructed in Southaven. It would become the central point to connections to rural parts of the county. He assigned Mike Perkins to the project that had held a position of sales manager for their public safety division. Mike had to learn very quickly and over saw the construction of a 195 cell tower in Southaven purchase “access to the on ramp” and picked gear for towers in Southaven and Hernando. We had a willing farmer who likewise needed access to the internet but he had a tower. Mike did understand “push to talk radios” and we got started bringing the net to my neighborhood. In May 2005 our tower was finished and we started installing equipment on the tower in Hernando. By August 2005 we had installed 50 customers. We realized the need was huge. I also

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realized how different my children would be without basic computer skills that they have learned by using the internet. Since 2005 we have installed 26 towers from Southaven this gives us a network foot print covering 3 counties in Desoto, Tate, and Tunica County. I feel for the families who struggle with this problem we have families in Tunica who are using 4g LTE and paying \$300 per month because its their only option. Yes they are excited to get a high speed plan who offers unlimited access and who tries our best to keep the network up and running 24/7/365.

Geographic Territory

Firenet1.com plan is to provide last mile service to 10 unique service areas in our county. These areas are known by us to have no other option no DSL/CATV option for service. In many cases these areas are covered in dense foliage which is hard to deliver wireless internet into these areas. However we have a unique approach of a Hybrid wireless/ CATV equipment delivery where we intend to Mx our service to a tower and off load from this point to these areas via traditional CATV plant. We have been researching this approach since 2010. We are convinced that we have an idea that can reach these service areas.

Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) Status.

We would consider getting this certification.

ETC status is designated by the FCC or a state commission.

List of Anchor Institutions

We have made an offer to anchor institutions to build a tower on the site of the VFD's in the county. We would offer them high speed at no charge for the use of their land they would likewise give us permission to put a tower on their property.

Proposed technology

We would use a combination of Wired and wireless. This is considered a Hybrid system so for example we would buy licensed 11GHz service to a location called a POP. From this POP we would use traditional DOSCIS 2.0 CMTS CATV build out using utility poles into the "last mile" service areas.

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State and/or Local or Tribal Government Participation in and/or Support for Project

We would need the county here to issue a rights of way permission we are asking for a waiver from the county. Our biggest restriction would be getting the local utility providers on board with pole attachments. They have been resistant to this because we are not a CLEC or a CATV. According to the TCA of 1996 we are permitted to make attachments they however have clung to the no public need clause of the act keeping us from building out to the rural areas. So we are left to try to deliver our service via wireless and in many of the “last mile” areas will not work. We know this because if it would we would have already made this happen. This led us to devising this idea for CATV/Hybrid system.

Existing Providers

In the areas we are delivering there is no other service provider’s. We are hitting “last mile” customers only.

Project Timeline

We believe we can get Proof of Concept (POC) completed in 120 days. We feel we can have this fully implemented in 3 year time frame.

Scalability

The internet has changed with the introduction of streaming services. We are improving our service already to meet the demands right now. We will in the next few weeks commit to gig service in our office. We are already on the Memphis E-ring from TWTC. We purchase 100mb upstream this upgrade will allow us to go to a OC-192 which is 10gb in bound before we have to change out equipment again. We know that clients are demanding more and more and we have put in place Caching services, routing our network to reduce broadcast traffic. We soon will install a Radius server and a bandwidth traffic manager that will help us look in on customers who are using a lot of internet.

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Total Business Investment

Currently our projections are 4.7 million dollars this should cover 1900 customers in “last mile” areas.

Investment Needed

One time cost aside we are sure that ongoing we will be able to cash flow ongoing cost each month. We would also invest in replacement parts that we would keep as backup and replacements in the event of a failure. This is the key to success is the stock kept in reserve for repairs.

We are committed to hiring additional staff to make this project happen we estimate that we would be able to hire 4 to 5 full time positions as a result of this project.

Leveraging Funds

We are unaware of any ongoing projects in this area that are funded by the FCC.

Total Project Cost

We think that we have asked for the proper amount and should cover our needs for the startup of this project.

Thank you for considering our Expression of Interest in your decision 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,

Mike Perkins
Richy Giachelli
Firenet1.com

Please see Exhibit A projected cost

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