



828.835.2825
info@sky-tekcommunications.com
31 N. Church St. Murphy, NC 28906

March 31, 2014

Connect America Fund
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20024

Re: Expression of Interest, Connect America Fund, Rural Broadband Trials, WC Docket No. 10-90

We recently were made aware of this opportunity for funding, courtesy of Mr. Keith E. Conover, With the NC Department of Commerce, Broadband Division. We talked of what exactly the connect America Fund is for, and how it could benefit an underserved area such as the one in which we provide our wireless service.

Sky-Tek Communications Is a Wireless Broadband Provider, locally owned and operated in Murphy, NC. We started out right at two years ago now, and have now grown to almost 800 customers. We attribute most of our success to the simple fact that there aren't any other decent options in our area, and the way in which a Wireless Network suites the mountainous terrain of Cherokee County. Access to fiber is limited, due to the terrain, as is any other type of wire connection to the home. We have found Wireless to be the most cost effective way of meeting the immediate demand for decent internet in Cherokee County NC.

We are Interested for funding or the following areas:

State	County	CountyName	TractID	Eligible High Cost	Extremely High Cost	Annual Support
NC	37039	Cherokee	37039930200	247	9	78976.55
NC	37039	Cherokee	37039930300	602	39	171496.35
NC	37039	Cherokee	37039930400	330	3	67998.14
NC	37039	Cherokee	37039930500	232	1	50724.82
NC	37039	Cherokee	37039930601	353	2	94475.59
NC	37039	Cherokee	37039930602	575	3	98060.54

We use all Ubiquiti Equipment for our airlinks, with frequencies in the 5 GHz, 2.4 GHz and some licensed 3 GHz for backhauls. We have a direct fiber line from Blue Ridge Mountain EMC (BRMEMC) that we currently use as our Fiber Provider. Bandwidth providers in this area are very limited. The two here in Murphy we have to choose from are BRMEMC and Balsam West Fiber Net. Fiber here is hard to get and expensive.

Mr. Conover mentioned that there may be a possibility for a reoccurring amount of funds from the CAF that may be available. If so, we would be interested in any amount of funds of that nature. Now we pay around 45 dollars a megabit for a dedicated line. With the reoccurring amount, we could provide more bandwidth to the customers we have now, and also offer higher packages to customers who have a need. We currently Offer:

Package(MBS)	Price
2Dwn/1Up	29.99
6Dwn/3Up	39.99
Business (Customizable)	49.99 and Up (Depending on Bandwidth Need)

*all packages are unlimited data, with no contract commitment

We constantly have request for Higher Speeds from our seasonal customers that have second homes in this area, as well as people moving here from other areas that have had access to higher speeds. Lack of Internet access in this county has directly affected economic growth. We recently provided access to the contracting company building the casino in our area. The only reason they contracted with us is that we could provide the highest speeds at their location (15mbsDwn/Up). Their need for download and upload speeds are great, and more would only help their progress, according to Alex Behringer, the Assistant Project Manager for Turner and Whiting. With access to reoccurring funds, we could afford to provide a higher package amount, therein helping individuals and businesses that have a need for higher speeds.

Another Way the Connect America Fund could help the Cherokee County area is with helping fund additional tower sites. We have helped bridge the gap to a number area's throughout the county, but there are still a number of areas that are in need. Cost is the biggest obstacle we face when trying to

expand our coverage area. The expense is considerably more for remote tower locations. We have a number of sites throughout the county that would help cover some of the high cost areas, we just lack the monetary resources needed to deploy our equipment.

With the cost of Backhaul antennae's, Sectoral antennae's, Remote switches, tower, site work, Right of Way/Clearing, it's all but unfeasible for a small company as ours at this point. After all of this is taken into account, power is the next issue. We have found a solar/wind hybrid application seems to be the best, if not only option in some situations. We have also found the cost for this type of setup is not cheap. We have at least four sites in mind that we could have operational, within the next six months, if funding was made available. Our best estimate for the cost of each remote tower site can range anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000, depending on a number of factors, such as site access, power availability, tower height, etc. With four sights, we are looking at possibly \$80,000 in expense, with additional lease fees in some cases.

We here at Sky-Tek are committed to expanding our network throughout the county, and eventually into neighboring areas. One advantage of a Wireless ISP is the rate at which growth can occur. Given we are all local we know the people in the community, and their needs when it comes to internet service. Our only motive is to be able to provide quality internet access to those in need. We wouldn't have made the impact we have thus far if it were not for the cooperation and help of many throughout the area. Having that relationship with the community has done nothing but help our cause. We feel with your funding, we can impact a wide coverage area in Cherokee County, and help many more in need. We look forward to possibly discussing our plans here in Cherokee County with you in greater detail. Thank you for time in reviewing our Expression of Interest.

Sincerely,

Justin Hensley

Sky-Tek Communications

