

**From:** [Ralph Schultz](#)  
**To:** [BOCrfc2015](#)  
**Subject:** Rural Broadband program  
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My name is Ralph Schultz. My wife, Gretchen, and I live on a farm in Webster County in the Ozarks of Missouri. For several years we had a dial up service for internet and email and had resigned ourselves to living with very slow internet access – so slow that as software on the internet grew more advanced, we were less and less able to access lots of sites. Then we heard about the program to bring broadband to rural areas to help all of us both for farming and for our children and grandchildren to keep up with other children who lived in towns and cities with access to faster internet service. I looked forward to the time our area would receive broadband and when I heard that a business called, Finally Broadband, had been formed and got a grant of a million dollars or so, I was content it wouldn't be long for us all. The person doing this also developed a website to let the citizens in Webster County and a few other counties nearby that were included in 'his' grant area and I went there a few times to read about how things were proceeding. Not long after he got his grant he explained that he would be placing towers in the counties at strategic areas for the best coverage. I thought at first that this was a good plan until I realized the towers were microwave and recalled that microwave towers were "line of sight" only and here we were, in the hills and valleys of the Ozark Mountains where line of sight was pretty well limited to the few farms in your valley and maybe one or two on the hills around. I wrote to the man and asked him how he might propose handling this problem. He said that he was hoping that the coverage would grow and even asked if there might be a farm with a silo on a hill nearby us that might allow him to place a tower on top of the silo. I told him there was and gave him the name of the owner but I never heard back from him. I figured that no one would really want a tower on top of their silo unless it was pretty worthwhile monetarily and figured, too, that the guy with the broadband service wasn't likely going to spend as much money as it would take to put towers on silos on every hill and dale around. Then, I went to his site one day and saw that he had pretty well completed his plan and, wouldn't you know it, he put towers in the little towns around the county – towns that pretty much already had DSL at least – and only those 'rural' places that were very near the towns (and, "in line of sight" of those towers) would benefit from his setup. So, a couple years went by and we decided we just had to get better internet and email service so we bit the bullet and ordered satellite service. If you have ever had satellite service you already know that the speeds on it, although a lot faster than dial up service, are expensive and way below traditional broadband speed as I understand it. About that time, I started reading about how some rural electric associations had started taking care of the problem themselves. Apparently, they figured that since they already had electric service to about every farm in the (true) rural areas then they were the only way farms were going to ever get broadband and apparently that has stayed true. Some of them reportedly already have service to virtually every single home that wanted it in their county area. Unfortunately, our own rural electric service here has not yet done this and I don't know if they are planning to or not. I hope so and as importantly, I hope that this program, if it still exists, can learn from what they have done and start backing the rural electric associations to take care of the people that were forgotten about when the program started up. I don't have anything against the fellow that started the company here as he realistically never had a chance to make it widespread in the Ozarks even if he wanted to, which maybe he never planned to because he never knew the topography of the area and is now just sitting back and being thankful the government set up his business for him. Anyway, that's my take on things and I

thought it might help to let you people that are in charge of this program know that there are likely a lot of people in this area that were never reached.

consideration in this matter,

Thank-you for your time and

Ralph Schultz