8. Executive Summary

Opportunities the proposed system seeks to address

We propose to build a fiber network in the rural community of New Bavaria, Ohio and its surrounding area in the counties of Henry, Putnam and Defiance in order to provide high speed internet service comprehensively throughout the proposed funded service area. Currently, we offer DSL service within New Bavaria, but the reach of our service does not extend much further than the town limits. Construction of a fiber network spanning the entire proposed funded area would give us the capacity to offer broadband service to all consumers in the area. Unfortunately, the local household density is too sparse, and the cost of a fiber network is too great for our company to afford such an undertaking on its own. However, with the aid of federal subsidy we would be able to carry out this project and provide high-speed internet service to residents in the area at affordable prices.

Description of the proposed funded service areas

The lack of comprehensive broadband coverage for the rural area of New Bavaria, Ohio

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1 According to the 2000 Census.
Proposed services and applications for the proposed funded service areas and users

- We will provide geographically comprehensive and reliable high speed internet service to residents, businesses and critical community facilities and anchor institutions by constructing a fiber network.
- The fiber network will give us the increased capacity to offer data, voice and video services to consumers.

Non-discrimination and interconnection obligations

The Benton Ridge Telephone Company (BRTC) is committed to non-discrimination and network openness. The company understands the dynamics of the Internet. It also understands that it must work to advance governmental and societal aims on the local level. In order for societal as well as company goals to be realized, BRTC understands that proper implementation is vital. To those ends, the company is committed to making its network 100% interoperable with other local networks. In turn, this will make our network interoperable with other global networks.

The applicant plans to extend the current network infrastructure to areas currently underserved by other network providers. Federal funding assistance will allow the applicant to advance the cause of non-discrimination by serving areas which currently lack service due to economic barriers. The network that the applicant plans to construct will also be open to other Internet service providers. This allows other ISPs with aims consistent with those of society as well as those of the BRTC will have the ability to provide rural end users with quality access to the Internet by utilizing the proposed network. To demonstrate this commitment and willingness to implement these goals, BRTC plans to offer its services at an affordable published rate. Also, BRTC is committed to offering users choice in Internet Service Providers. To demonstrate this commitment, BRTC has already agreed to offer part of its bandwidth to aggregate Internet service providers. By essentially outsourcing some of the work that is less infrastructural in nature to other ISPs, BRTC can concentrate on specializing in infrastructural build-out for the purposes of promoting the unfettered dissemination of information.

Description of broadband system to be deployed

BRTC expects to deploy a system of dedicated dark fiber in its proposed service areas. The proposed system will enable each end user to connect directly to the network allowing for more reliability, connectivity and better speeds. The fact that the system is structured around the dedication of fiber to each end user enables BRTC to better reach its goal of more penetration and better Internet service provision. Also, BRTC has made provisions for the proposed network to be able to shoulder and to provide for additional dedicated dark fiber expansion as the area grows demographically.

Qualifications of the applicant that demonstrate the ability to implement and operate a broadband infrastructure, and/or be a sustainable broadband services provider

Our company has had over one hundred years of experience in the telecommunications industry and has provided internet service to customers via DSL since 1999. We can draw on our diverse expertise in the telephone, cable television, and internet service industries in undertaking the proposed project. Throughout our history, we have demonstrated our ability to incorporate and adapt to new technological advances in order to best serve our customers. Establishing a core fiber network is the next step for our company to improve our ability to serve all of the consumers in our region with reliable high-speed
internet. We are a business with strong roots in our rural community and we are committed to contributing to its technological and economic growth.

**Overall infrastructure cost of the broadband system**

The entire cost of the total broadband system is $6,359,894, which is also the amount of our BIP funding request. We feel that we have put together a proposal that is both reasonable and necessary in its budget to provide quality broadband access to underserved and unserved areas. We have chosen the market leaders in internet and network services to provide the most effective and efficient materials, and we have also worked with these vendors to get the best possible prices.

**Overall expected subscriber projections for the project**

Our 5 year projections have led us to expect a growth of 1225 new subscribers. Specifically, that will include 358 for internet, 586 for voice services and 281 for video services.

**Number of jobs estimated to be created or saved as a result of this project.**

With stimulus funding, we expect to incrementally create 68 job opportunities directly related to the project within the 3-year span of the grant. BRTC also expects job creation and growth for the underserved locations which will then have access to high speed Internet and the opportunities that such access affords.