Executive Summary

An integral part of Governor Jeremiah (Jay) Nixon's vision for the State of Missouri's broadband future, the MoBroadbandNow 'Sho-Me MO' middle mile project will dramatically increase the prospects for competitive last-mile broadband services throughout rural, underserved and unserved areas of the State where 93% of the proposed service territory is economically distressed. The network operator and Applicant, Sho-Me Technologies, LLC, is pleased to submit this application for the category of Comprehensive Community Infrastructure (CCI) focusing on middle-mile infrastructure funding under the NTIA BTOP program. This project is a public-private partnership, cooperatively developed with and fully supported by the State of Missouri and other key stakeholders in the State. The proposed network exemplifies precisely the type of project the Recovery Act apparently intended the respective agencies to support. The vast majority of Missouri is rural, with numerous small, isolated, rural communities whose very existence is threatened by the lack of affordable broadband services. Many of these areas are in economic decline. With the cooperation of a variety of public and private sector supporters, Applicant intends to create a broadband ecosystem in which broadband competition can flourish, giving previously underserved communities, businesses, and residents the opportunity to acquire fiber-based service at affordable prices. The proposed funded service area was developed in consultation with the State of Missouri and is referred to as 'Sho-Me MO'. With reference to detailed demographic and other data, Applicant has identified a network footprint that promises to reach areas of Missouri most in need of connectivity and reliability. The network encompasses the southern central part of the state covering 30 counties by way of 1,380 miles of fiber optic cable. The network, operated by Applicant will provide state-of-the-art data transmission services on an aggressively open-access basis, for all last-mile broadband providers. Of the 229 communities represented in the 30 counties, 136 communities fall within a half mile of the proposed network. The fiber will be lit with Dense Wave-Division Multiplexing (DWDM) and Ethernet technologies. The technical design of the network and the underlying business plan reflect the intended purpose of the network, which is not to limit its use to certain favored entities or applications, but instead to be a pure 'open access' network, with the facilities potentially shared among over 66,000 unrestricted business users and 260,000 households. There are over 6,000 health care and social assistance businesses in the service area, as well as, 140 school districts and 69 libraries. Applicant is an interexchange carrier certified by the Missouri Public Service Commission and adheres to the principles contained in the FCC's Internet Policy Statement. The network will not favor any applications and/or content over others, nor will it define the kind of services that can be offered by other providers. The choices of services are determined between the end user and their service provider. Applicant is a subsidiary of Sho-Me Power Electric Cooperative, an electric power generation
and transmission cooperative that has served rural Missouri electric service cooperatives for 62 years. Applicant has provided middle-mile communications services in Missouri since 1997, and has a proven track record of success. For years, the network owned by Applicant has serviced the Education Network providing circuits to Missouri’s K-12 schools, colleges, public libraries, health care, and affiliated organizations. The project will support and complement several other Recovery Act projects, including the DoE Smart Grid initiatives, the Title XIII health information technology initiatives, and the Title VIII education programs, among others. The network will conservatively connect 100 community facilities, public safety, and anchor institutions and many more via other last mile providers. The overall infrastructure cost of the planned system is $29,200,000. With contributed funds from Applicant, as described in the application, the total grant amount requested is $26,600,000. The value of the total project is $38,000,000 which includes an in-kind contribution from the Applicant of 880 miles of existing route miles of fiber. The population of the proposed funded service area is over 1,000,000 people. The initiative will expand broadband availability geographically to an additional 26% to 29% percent of the State of Missouri. It is estimated that approximately 288 job-years will be impacted by the project in the near term (e.g., fiber installation technicians, construction workers, etc.) and this project is expected to be complete in one year (12) calendar months. Please see attached map of Missouri for proposed coverage area.