The Violet Township Regional Comprehensive Community Infrastructure Project (VTRCCIP) is seeking ARRA Stimulus funding that will deliver dark and lit fiber services throughout the designated service area. The 112.48 mile network will address a critical regional residential, business, and economic development need. The VTRCCIP will serve several communities, including, Pickerington, Canal Winchester, Baltimore, Reynoldsburg, Lancaster and Violet Township. Violet Township, the lead applicant, has been attempting to have carriers build fiber to local schools and government offices for several years but the monthly costs for those services has been too high. Additionally, the service area, on SE side of Columbus is in direct competition for critical economic development opportunities with wealthier communities to the north who have built fiber networks, with existing community resources, to their schools, industrial parks, key corporate employers, and local government offices. The communities of Baltimore and Canal Winchester are also caught in the same cycle of revenue reductions caused by an unemployed population, stagnant or declining business and employment growth, and their inability to create an infrastructure to attract and keep business and residents in the area. The City of Lancaster Ohio, for the past 5 years, has slowly built a fiber network throughout the City in order to serve local government infrastructure as well as education facilities and industrial business parks. The problem has been that no provider over those years has agreed to build dark fiber services to the Lancaster network itself. The only option was the local ILEC, and after three years, Lancaster was able to get pricing (with significant restrictions) that allowed it to connect into the Columbus area. This arrangement has left Lancaster with limited connectivity options for the entities connected to the network and entities must always use the ILEC (and their rates) to get out of Lancaster. The Round II Stimulus grant offers a one-time opportunity for VTRCCIP to take advantage of their unique and strategic location near the Columbus metro area. It will greatly enhance the capabilities, resources, and strategically extend the connected networks of the nearby communities that already have fiber networks. The application will immediately create opportunities to work with existing national carriers, previously constructed community fiber networks, and create large scale on-net capabilities for businesses. The VTRCCIP will be anchored in the Bluemile data center, one of the largest carrier neutral interconnection points of presence in the Midwest. Customers utilizing the VTRCCIP will be able to create a physical presence in most major cities throughout the US through the over 181 carrier connectivity options terminated in the Bluemile data center. Conversely, the carrier neutral VTRCCIP will act like an open door for a multitude of carriers to access their customers throughout the 112.48 mile network. VTRCCIP already has TW Telecom agreeing to purchase a 20 yr IRU for 12 ' 24 strands on the network to get to key areas and business opportunities in which their network does not cover. The
VTRCCIP will distribute its fiber resources using four methods: 1.) 48 strands via a 20 yr IRU (1/3 of the network) will be utilized by Bluemile, the 3rd party contracted to manage the network and distribute lit services throughout the network. Their efforts will also generate a percent of gross revenue (15%) back to the project that will be used to support network sustainability; 2.) Dark fiber will be swapped with other community fiber networks and the CAO-MMC 34 county network to the east and south; 3.) Dark fiber will be utilized to create economic development incentives throughout the VTRCCIP service area; and 4.) Dark fiber will be sold to carriers to immediately generate a cash flow to support the longevity of the project. The VTRCCIP has maximized its scaling ability to meet the needs of the communities it serves and the customers accessing the network. We have diligently worked to establish agreements with other communities, institutions, carriers, ISP's and one of the largest employers in the area. We have carefully used all of our resources to create a valuable regional asset that will not only attract economic development opportunities to the area but the network will attract carrier and ISP resources to increase service options and reduce costs to the consumer. The network will be open and will comply with the NOFA's requirements for interconnection and non-discrimination. Specifically, the network will be compliant with FCC's Internet Policy Statement, will not favor unlawful internet applications or content, will display network management policies and provide notices regarding changes. The interconnection requirement will be satisfied by negotiating with any party making a bona fide request to connect to the network. Various points of presence and splice points are planned and will be installed along the network Bluemile will follow all of the standard best efforts and practices related to ensuring open access to the network. Best efforts will be followed to ensure openness for capacity allocations, appropriate differentiation among applications, and to manage illegal and harmful network content. Bluemile, which will manage the network, is a commercial service provider. Bluemile combines the one of the midwest's largest carrier-neutral transport network and a Tier 3 data center to provide an application-ready environment for enterprise and government clients to access and host software applications with maximum flexibility and at aggressive price points. As a datacenter service provider, Bluemile offers collocation, remote backup, disaster recovery, A and B power, managed and virtualized hosting, and additional data center services, including one IU, a full rack or a private cage. The data center is a neutral location located at 226 N. Fifth Avenue in Columbus, Ohio serving as a point of presence for major internet service providers. Central Ohio has 4 community networks that are owned and were paid for by the communities. Dublin, Westerville, Gahanna, and New Albany. Dublin only allocates dark fiber to clientele for economic development reasons. Westerville, Gahanna, and New Albany have all contracted with a third party to operate, manage, maintain, and sell services. All the communities have made arrangements to receive a percentage of the gross revenues generated from sales of broadband and data center services. All of the communities are more than satisfied with the arrangements, the monthly revenues coming back to the community, and the economic development impact of the dark fiber resources. None of the communities have been required to hire any additional staff to manage the third party. Currently, Bluemile is the third party management company for Gahanna and New Albany while all four networks have connections into their data center. The best way for communities to assure that dark fiber assets are in their communities is to do it themselves. Unfortunately, the only communities that have the resources to finance the fiber construction from the beginning are those communities with low unemployment, high per capita incomes, high tax base, and positive community growth trends in place. Violet Township does not have the financial resources to
construct the entire network on their own but it has taken the necessary steps as a community to commit to putting up a 30% match in order to facilitate the receipt of ARRA Stimulus funding. Not only will Violet Township use their 30% match to help their own community but, they have embraced other disconnected communities along an 112.48 mile fiber route to include those communities in a Comprehensive Community Infrastructure network. Once the network is funded, VTRCCIP will use the proven method of contracting with a third party management group (Bluemile) to maintain and operate the network and to generate an additional revenue stream. Violet Township also has shown significant foresight by forging alliances with the other communities with fiber networks and national telecom carriers to continue to develop and grow its 'Comprehensive Community Infrastructure Networks'.