Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: EAGLE COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

Project Title: Eagle Middle Mile Connectivity

Project Type: Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

_______________________ Executive Summary_______________________

Middle Mile Transport Project Title: Eagle Middle Mile Connectivity
Project Description: Eagle is reaching out to connect Rural Kansas residents to their community anchors and their community anchors to the world. Doing so will enable them to meet the competitive challenges facing healthcare, education, and business job and wealth creation.

Executive Summary: Rural Kansas is often viewed as isolated by geography and certainly may be. Rural Kansas is isolated from accessible and affordable Broadband services, but is not isolated by the challenges facing the key societal community anchor segments of healthcare, education, and business. Within our mandate of being the premier partner for the economic revitalization of the rural Kansas communities that we serve, we are committed to insuring that rural Kansas communities will not be facing these challenges alone.

The Rural Kansas healthcare delivery system is based on critical care hospitals and rural healthcare clinics meeting point of care community needs. These hospitals and clinics funnel patients to larger community hospitals and specialty clinics when they face problems that are beyond their ability to treat and serve. Key to maintaining the lowest cost per effective service is the ability to share healthcare documents and images with specialists working out of area and have rapid communication regarding patients and their problems. Few areas of the nation understand the need for electronic medical records in the quest for more affordable and responsive healthcare. The chief obstacle to any implementation of that model is the lack of affordable broadband with the size and scope needed to implement such a solution.

Public Education in Rural Kansas is facing a funding crisis quite unlike any that has been faced since the 1930's. The solution of raising more revenue through state and local taxes faces the reality of a national economic downturn. The lack of business growth that makes more funding from these traditional sources seems unlikely.

Public schools are looking for ways to cut costs while keeping services high and much like healthcare, they are facing these challenges without the accessibility of affordable Broadband in the size and scope they need to step outside the brick and mortar solution of teachers and classrooms. Our Rural Kansas School districts already are working on cooperative ventures to reach out with tools like 'Virtual School' and sharing of resources but cannot effectively meet these challenges with a five or ten year broadband build plan and again without any way to fund these broadband build plans on the horizon.

Local government’s today struggle with the deployment of technology dependent on bandwidth due to both raw availability and affordability in the areas they serve. Technologies like Next Generation 911 (NG911) cannot even be considered without the lifeline of fiber optic broadband services needed to operate it. NG911 services allow for voice, video, and data/text communications support and location-specific emergency alerts for any communications device that are critical in the expanses of Rural Kansas where response times are clearly tied to rapid location of emergency events. Underlying all of the above
problems is the foundational American premise that business creates jobs, jobs create wealth, and wealth creates the base for both healthcare and school funding. Eagle Communications has been and continues to be a company that drives 'Business to your Business' on Main Street and we know that affordable broadband and the creativity of the entrepreneur is key to making that happen. Rural Kansas businesses must compete for business, employees, lifestyle, and financial capital resources with the rest of the global economy and broadband is a key point of leverage outside of the fulcrum from the problem of economic growth in our communities. Eagle Communications stands ready to assist in moving all of these issues towards a solution for a Middle Mile Broadband delivery system using the best of breed technology along with our partners within the listed communities. Eagle has a long history, 44 years, of connecting people to their communities and using partnerships with schools, hospitals, local government, and business entities to do so. Eagle has extensively worked within each of the market segments over the last four years doing needs assessments and potential project planning and economic development. Eagle has signed agreements with each city and with many of the other anchor institutions listed to deliver services that can be expanded to meet this new opportunity. Eagle has people working as an integral partner today in these communities on economic development issues and has generated successful projects in schools, hospitals, local government, and private business to hold and expand jobs and add to the creation of community wealth. This project will upgrade the ability to expand that history of success and greatly bring forward the economic opportunity and jobs creation needed in Rural Kansas. Using the Council of Economic Advisors methodology of calculation, this project will add 90 job-years, (58 direct and indirect, and 32 induced.) To achieve these goals, Eagle Communications will build the middle mile fiber optic chain connecting to the anchor institutions, schools, hospitals, public safety, and other local government entities to the last mile delivery systems from the Eagle communities in Central Kansas to each other and then will connect that ring back to the Eagle Network Core in Hays and then on to the Eagle communities in the Western service loop. Key to the overall success of Broadband adoption in the Rural Kansas project area is the addition of fiber assets to be able to transport and deploy Tier 1 level Internet from the Eagle Network Core in Hays out to the remote sites where incumbent vendors have either been unable or unwilling to support this level of service in the past. From the end point of the middle mile builds, the community infrastructure in certain areas will need to be built to carry the needed capacity to community anchor customers, current business customers, and entrepreneurial residents seeking to grow economic opportunity for themselves and their community. Federal Broadband Stimulus dollars are the leverage that makes this project viable for Eagle. This project will pass 19184 homes and an existing customer base of 4764 Internet clients in the proposed service area (as of the end of January 2010.) Of that number, 4335 are residential customers, 429 are business customers and 78 are metro Ethernet fiber customers. Included in this project is a portion of needed Last Mile build that will deploy DOCSIS 3.0 in some communities and upgrade key portions of Plant in order to deliver the broadband services proposed via the Middle Mile portion of the Project. This project will allow the competitive leverage to allow rural healthcare to fully utilize the transport of electronic medical records and will allow healthcare professionals remote access to medical records which will become the highest cost and compliance driver for these service providers in the near future. Eagle has worked with Critical Care Hospitals in the communities of Hillsboro, Marion, Abilene, Clay Center, and St. Francis to plan how to use the proposed expanded Broadband services to solve this real world problem. Schools will have the ability to access video over
broadband in order to enhance the services in the district as well as to partner schools outside of the
district. Schools will be able to access resources for instruction and management outside of the district
and will be able to operate virtual schools as needed. Eagle has worked with Schools in every city in the
proposed Service area on a continuing basis to help them maximize the use of their scarce dollars to
achieve the modernization of their broadband resources. The metric for the potential positive impact
upon the creative forces of Rural Kansas business can hardly be overestimated for without this type of
Broadband services, the Rural Kansas Business economic will rapidly fade before the competitive
challenges of the global marketplace. Eagle stands ready upon the award of the proposed project to
work with not only our own Broadband delivery systems but other ISP's in the service area that have
similar needs for affordable Middle Mile broadband delivery. The overall cost of the project is
$8,263,937 and it will be completed two years and nine months after project award.