Broadband USA Applications Database

**Applicant Name:** COM NET, INC.

**Project Title:** GigEPAC--GigE PLUS Availability Coalition

**Project Type:** Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

_______________________ Executive Summary _____________________

GigE PLUS Availability Coalition [GigEPAC] involves 28 counties in western Ohio by addressing the compelling problem of the digital divide between urban (20%) and rural (80%) communities, and the subsequent inequality of economic development and quality-of-life opportunities resulting from inadequate residential, commercial, medical, public safety, and educational access to high-speed broadband services. GigEPAC's service delivery area includes 2,442 unserved square miles representing 30,488 unserved households. The service delivery areas finds 23 of the 28 counties having child poverty rates of 10% or worse with 8 counties greater than 15% and 3 counties higher than 18%. Directly impacting child poverty are the unemployment rates in western Ohio with 20 of 28 counties above the Ohio average of 11.8% ranging from 9.3% to 19.3% (January 2010). Automotive-related restructuring has had a negative impact on employment in 21 of the 28 counties in the region. In May 2002 the Consumer Federation of America released a report noting the true measure of the digital divide is in assessing home Internet access. Being disconnected in the Information Age is not like being deprived of a luxury. Being disconnected means being disconnected form the economy and democratic debate. The GigEPAC project allows access in rural Ohio enabling these rural communities to enhance local economies, better manage natural resources, and improve access to education and health services. The service delivery area for the project finds 19.4% of the region unserved with 98% of the households underserved.

Applicants Qualifications'Com Net delivers big pipe transport solutions from Metro Ohio to Strategic Local Communication Provider Partners that have a foundation and focus on serving Tier 3 Markets and Rural Communities in Ohio. These cost-effective, high-availability transport solutions are utilized to power our Strategic Partners Local Service and Distribution Networks for delivering Voice, Video and Data service to Residential and Business subscribers located throughout the served community. Today Com Net and its' 30 Last Mile Broadband Service Providers serve 120 unique school facilities directly or indirectly based on District-owned fiber from its' central hub connection to its' other buildings. Of these, 15 are served through wireless-to-the-school. Through the use of Middle Mile Components, these schools will be upgraded to Fiber-to-the Building. The schools are served by three of the Ohio Information Technology Centers (ITC)'NOACA, NOACSC and WOCO. Through the use of these Middle Mile Components the connection to the hub ITC sites will be transitioned from a lateral, unprotected connection to a protected, diverse path connection. The connection to NOACSC today is a single path 300 Mbps Ethernet Aggregate Hub connection. Partnerships'To achieve, build and operate the proposed middle-mile network, the GigEPAC offers a far reaching public-private partnership among three existing network providers including: Com Net [Lead Applicant] is the managing member of Broadband Network Group, LLC and Independents Fiber Network, LLC, an Ohio Interexchange Carrier, as well as a participant
in other shared network arrangements. Their NW Ohio network currently spans more than 600 route miles and serves 30 independent last mile providers, both wireless and wireline. In addition, Com Net is the managing member of Tier 2 Communications, a Competitive Local Exchange Carrier, and Bright Long Distance, a Switchless Long Distance Provider, underscoring its knowledge of carrier relations. Zayo Bandwidth [Sub-Applicant] is a provider of fiber-optic telecom services in 23 states and 141 markets, including LH/Metro 2,006 miles of existing fiber in Ohio and over 20K total fiber miles nationally. Zayo's successful growth strategy in the past several years has attracted $325 million in private investment and secured $150 million in debt financing. Zayo will strengthen its Ohio commercial backbone and provide links to carrier hotels and Tier 1 network service providers to carry commercial traffic to/from the service area. OARnet [Public Sub-Applicant] is a 23-year-old statewide network operated by the Ohio Board of Regents serving community colleges, universities, K-12 schools, health care and government offices. Operating on more than 1,850 miles of fiber-optic cable, OARnet will strengthen the redundancy and reach of its backbone network through the OMCC'Ohio Middle Mile Consortium. OARnet also provides peering to Internet 2, MERIT and PennREN, providing its constituents with inter-connection to academic and research networks worldwide. Community Anchor Institutions' GigEPAC will improve connectivity for a total of 2,959 community anchor institutions in the 28-county western Ohio service area, including: 28 postsecondary institutions; 322 public safety facilities; 279 health care facilities and county health departments; 706 K-12 school buildings with enrollment of 325,881; 165 libraries; 14 State of Ohio parks; 575 State, county, and local government offices, 504 community support agencies, and 377 public housing. Twelve school districts with identified needs for Ethernet or Fiber-to-the-School will be served through Middle Mile Fiber Components from the project. Com Net has identified an additional 1,502 sites throughout the service area. A portion of these sites are served today by Time Warner Cable, Buckeye Cable and/or Cincinnati Bell. Time Warner has a contract with the State of Ohio that the school districts can purchase from. Com Net understands that in certain areas Time Warner is the only provider of Ethernet over Fiber, and in many instances an ICB is required to construct fiber to the schools. In other areas competition already exists in serving the schools via fiber through Buckeye or Cincinnati Bell. Of these 1,502 sites, 788 are in the Ohio Middle Mile Consortium in the interconnected counties, which are viewed to be competitive service areas. This leaves a balance of 714 Sites, which in Com Net's view, the state's interest would be best served by maintaining carrier diversity, as f Com Net and its' Last Mile Broadband Service Providers were to provide Fiber-to-the-School to half of the locations or 357 sites. Com Net is therefore projecting to serve another 357 sites through the use of the expanded network's Middle Mile Facility Components coupled with investment in new Last Mile Facilities by its Last Mile Broadband Service Providers. The build-out service plan will therefore be based on Fiber to the Building and not a wireless deployment. Com Net plans to serve the PSAPs in all but the interconnected counties (or 25 County PSAPs plus individual municipality PSAPs). Com Net - between it and its' Broadband Service Providers (BSPs) - already serves 3 of the 25 County PSAPs, leaving a balance of 22 PSAPs which Com Net and its BSPs plan to serve with Fiber to the County PSAP location. Com Net has identified 82 wireless tower sites that Com Net or its BSPs have legacy fiber facilities running by that could be put into service through the upgrade of capacity of the network using the proposed wave technology. These 82 tower sites are primarily in Phase 2 or 3 roll-out plan areas and many have already been served by Time Warner Cable. There is concern over a single fiber cut disabling service to multiple towers at a time. Com Net believes it will be able to successfully service 50% of these locations over
time, as current term requirements expire, or as cell sites go into the implementation stages through Phase 2 or Phase 3 roll out. In addition to these sites, the expanded Network coverage in the 25 non-interconnected counties will present an opportunity to reach three (3) times the number of tower sites, however these will be on routes that will be competitive with ZAYO and OARnet as Com Net's sub-recipients on the project. Com Net's estimate is for a third of this business or 82 Tower Sites through the use of the new construction Middle Mile Components. Potential for Job Creation'The Council of Economic Advisors' ARRA job creation formula and guidelines were used to estimate the job creation benefit of the GigEPAC project. To this end, the total governmental project request amount was divided by $92,000 to determine the number of Full-Time Equivalents (FTE). These FTE numbers were divided by into the direct, indirect and induced job estimations for the proposed project. The resulting estimate for job creation for the GigEPAC project was 329.