Applicant Name: SILVER STAR TELEPHONE COMPANY, INC.

Project Title: Expanding Greater Yellowstone Area Broadband Opportunities

Project Type: Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

_______________________ Executive Summary _______________________

Almost the entire state of Wyoming is by definition, 'rural and remote' with a land area of 97,814 square miles and a 2008 estimated population of only 532,668. Wyoming is the ninth largest state in area, but the least populated state of the nation. The entire state has an average of 5.3 people per square mile. Cities, towns and small communities are predominantly distributed across the state with two to three hour drives between population centers of 25,000 to 50,000 people. Wyoming businesses and citizens have, by necessity begun to strongly embrace broadband technology to overcome the distance and density factors. When one takes a close look at Wyoming, a relatively square state with distributed population centers; existing telecommunications provider's fiber optic facility segments form a partial ring. In essence, a fiber network topology that is an inverted 'C' with the 'gap' in the network being the project as proposed and described herein. This 'gap' has restricted the availability of robust and protected broadband opportunities for the citizens and businesses of Wyoming for over a decade. Today, there is an approximate eighty-six (86) mile 'gap' between the endpoints of an existing 960 route mile fiber network that traverses nearly two-thirds the state of Wyoming. The 'gap' is located in northwest Wyoming, between Togwotee Pass (on the continental divide) and Jackson. The Governor's Office, the Wyoming Business Council, Office of the State CIO, numerous state agencies, other communications carriers, business entrepreneurs, health care providers, educational facilities and community leaders have identified 'closing the gap' as a highest priority broadband stimulus funded project for Wyoming. The resulting fiber optic ring topology would consist of this project, existing fiber segments owned by the applicant and existing fiber segments owned by other established telecommunications companies serving Wyoming. When completed, this project will enable robust and diverse (redundant) broadband network opportunities for 11 counties and 26 communities in Wyoming. Some of the cities, towns and small communities along the entire proposed fiber ring topology include Cheyenne, Laramie, Medicine Bow, Hanna, Rawlins, Wamsutter, Rock Springs, Green River, Lyman, Mtn View, Evanston, Cokeville, Afton, Freedom, Jackson, Dubois, the Wind River Reservation, Riverton, Shoshoni, Casper, Douglas and Wheatland. Direct and indirect beneficiaries of a robust and diverse (redundant) fiber optic broadband network topology include: ' Approximately 366,000 Wyoming residents or almost 70% of the US Census 2008 estimated state population (www.census.gov/popest/cities/files/SUB-EST2008-56.csv) ' The University of Wyoming and five 2-year institutions (community colleges) ' 222 Wyoming Public Schools (https://wdesecure.k12.us/public_ed/schools.html) ' 42 Participating Facilities (hospitals, community mental health centers and substance abuse clinics) in the Wyoming Telehealth Network (WYOMING TELEHEALTH NETWORK, Proposal to FCC Rural Health Care Pilot Program
www.fcc.gov/cgb/rural/rhcp.html, Wyoming [Part 1]) ' WYOLINK (Wyoming Homeland Security Communications Initiative; http://wyolink.state.wy.us) and other local and statewide emergency response teams and related initiatives (http://wyohomelandsecurity.state.wy.us/main.aspx) ' Other providers, telecommunications carriers and adjoining state networks seeking alternate or protected broadband transport and carrier class service routes in and out of Jackson, and the state of Wyoming in general ' Start-up businesses looking for network reliability, existing businesses seeking to expand to other communities or connect offices using less costly, shorter transport and circuit routes. The project will consist of a robust DWDM and SONET architecture to provide up to 40 lambdas of 2.5 Gb/s capacity in a working/protect configuration and OC-48 down to DS1 services. Silver Star currently maintains an open network policy and through its Internet provider company does not differentiate among applications that traverse our Internet network. Silver Star commits to adhere to the NOFA's non-discrimination and network interconnection obligations if awarded BTOP funds. Upon completion of the buried fiber optic/plowcon for the Togwotee-Moran segment, Silver Star will deploy Fujitsu SONET and DWDM transport equipment to accommodate the expected service requests for advanced broadband transport and carrier class services. Silver Star Telephone Company, Inc., doing business as Silver Star Communications, has over fifty years experience building and operating a widespread, state-of-the-art broadband network. SSC has designed, constructed and operates a robust network consisting of over 396 miles of transport fiber optic cable supporting diverse and redundant DWDM and SONET circuits. SSC has personnel with extensively experienced staff in all areas of management, engineering, operations, customer service and finance who are prepared to implement and operate this proposed project as an integral part of its existing robust network. Silver Star is an established facilities-based provider of advanced broadband transport and carrier class services for numerous providers in Wyoming. These providers include incumbent LECS, RLECS, CLECS, ISPs, cellular and other wireless providers. Additionally, SSC provides interconnection and transport for an adjacent statewide network: Syringa Networks. Silver Star’s network and transport management, pricing, interconnection agreements and service delivery policies are well established, competitive and transparent. The proposed project is estimated to result in 79 created or saved jobs. Industry estimates place the cost of this proposed middle mile project (Jackson, WY to Togwotee Pass) at over 7 million dollars. Silver Star proposes to construct this project with a 22% cost match. For more than a decade, telecommunications carriers have tried to justify the costs required to 'close the gap'. The costs as estimated are reasonable given the distance and the fact that the project will traverse the Continental Divide (elev. 9,700 feet), the Bridger-Teton National Forest and parts of Grand Teton National Park. ARRA broadband stimulus funding represents an opportunity to construct a critical and long-needed project and invest in the Broadband future of the state of Wyoming that might not otherwise be constructed due to costs and area remoteness.