



# Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

5A

Agenda Item #

**Requested Meeting Date:** November 22, 2016

**Title of Item:** Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant/ BBC Update

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA<br><input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA<br><input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY  | <b>Action Requested:</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion<br><input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item<br><input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing*<br><i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i> |
| <b>Submitted by:</b><br>Ross Wagner   | <b>Department:</b><br>Economic Development & Forest Ind   |
| <b>Presenter (Name and Title):</b><br>Ross Wagner, Economic Development & Forest Industry Coordinator   | <b>Estimated Time Needed:</b><br>20 minutes   |
| <b>Summary of Issue:</b><br><p>Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant. Attached is a draft for an Aitkin County Broadband Grant. The request from CTC to extend their fiber to the Aitkin Industrial Park brought up a lot of questions. Namely, how do we pick and choose what areas to invest our funds, how do we decide what provider to invest with, how do requests such as the Industrial Park fit into a company's bigger picture for Aitkin County. Another point is how do we work with broadband providers to extend their services further out, to get more area of the county covered for broadband?</p> <p>After discussing this with Patrick, the concept of a grant application came up. This will allow us to review and compare what providers want to do and provide funding to extend services. In the draft, there is an annual application date of May 1st. By being able to get all potential requests at once, we can compare and decide what is best for Aitkin County. I am recommending that \$450,000 over a three year period of that be put aside for an Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant with \$300,000 from the Economic Development Fund and \$150,000 from County Development (Con-Con area) funds.</p> <p>We were successful in our application to become a Blandin Broadband Community, the link below is to Blandin's press release. This program will allow county institutions to apply for \$65,000 - \$75,000 in grant funds for broadband adoption programs or equipment and make up to \$25,000 available to the county, on a matching basis, to do broadband feasibility or mapping type studies. There is a training session on November 30th so I will have more information on the mechanics of the program at that time.</p> <p><a href="http://blandinfoundation.org/news-room/news-releases/six-iron-range-communities-selected-for-blandin-foundation-broadband-communities-program">http://blandinfoundation.org/news-room/news-releases/six-iron-range-communities-selected-for-blandin-foundation-broadband-communities-program</a></p> |   |
| <b>Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:</b><br><br>   |   |
| <b>Recommended Action/Motion:</b><br>Proceed with Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant, develop final version.   |   |
| <b>Financial Impact:</b><br>Is there a cost associated with this request? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No<br>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$<br>Is this budgeted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i>  |   |

Legally binding agreements must have County Attorney approval prior to submission.

## **Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant**

**Overview:** It is our intent to partner with existing internet service providers to provide high speed internet access to as much area in Aitkin County as possible. The purpose of this grant fund is to incentivize private investment in the Aitkin County broadband infrastructure.

**Purpose:** Aitkin County is striving to have as many of our citizens, businesses and institutions to have access to high speed broadband internet. Currently, areas of Aitkin County are experiencing growth in the broadband infrastructure; the purpose of this grant to assist private broadband providers to reach areas in Aitkin County that otherwise would not be part of planned broadband infrastructure investments.

### **Availability of Funds, required match:**

Aitkin County is providing \$150,000.00 per year in funding for the Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant for the years 2017, 2018, 2019. Applicants can apply for all or some of the total amount available. Aitkin County reserves the right to not award any grants and or to offer a pro-rated amount if more than one qualified application is received. Applicants must provide, at a minimum, a match equal to or greater than the grant amount requested.

### **Criteria of Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant:**

The goal of this grant program is to fund those projects that will provide internet access at the State of Minnesota established speeds of 10Mbps down and 5Mbps upload. Aitkin County will consider projects that do not immediately meet those guidelines but demonstrate they will be scalable to meet those speeds in the future. A Fiber to the Home (FTTH) network is most desired by Aitkin County; projects that are not FTTH but can meet the guidelines will be eligible. Applications that demonstrate the ability to meet the State of Minnesota guidelines of 10Mbps down and 5Mbps up, ability to provide service to the largest number of households and offer the ability to be scalable up to even higher speeds will receive the most consideration in the awarding of grant funds. Any broadband development project located in Aitkin County is eligible for the Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant. However, most consideration will be given to those projects that provide service to areas of Aitkin County that either do not have adequate coverage nor will not have adequate coverage in the near future.

### **Eligible Program Costs:**

Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant Program can be used for infrastructure deployment costs for a qualifying project. "Broadband deployment costs" or "costs" mean the cost of the acquisition and installation of middle-mile and last-mile infrastructure that support broadband service.

Construction of broadband infrastructure may include any of the following: project planning; obtaining construction permits; construction of facilities, including construction of both "middle mile" and "last mile" infrastructure; equipment; and installation and testing of the broadband service.

**Leverage of State of Minnesota or other broadband funding sources:**

Aitkin County Broadband Grants funds can be used to match State, Federal or other public or private funding as those funding sources allow. Though it is our desire that additional funds be leveraged by this grant, it is not a requirement to receive Aitkin County Broadband Grant funds.

**Application Process:**

Applications are available through the Aitkin County Economic Development & Forest Industry Coordinator Department, c/o

Ross Wagner

Aitkin County Courthouse

217 2nd Street NW, #131

Aitkin, MN 56431

[rwagner@co.aitin.mn.us](mailto:rwagner@co.aitin.mn.us)

218-927-7305

Please direct any questions or inquiries to Ross Wagner

**Due Date:**

Applications are accepted annually on May 31<sup>st</sup>.



**Grant request amount:** How much funding are you seeking from the Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant Program for this project? How much are you committing?

**Total cost of project:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Local/Provider match provided:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**County Funds Applied for:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Funds applied for or anticipating to apply for:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**What is the source of these funds:** \_\_\_\_\_

**General Time Frame of Grant Project:**

Starting Month \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Year    Ending Month \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Year

**Location(s) of your project:**

In addition to the written location information supplied above, you must provide a map of the project area, including geographical boundaries and road segments where broadband will be provided. Include the service area boundaries and also include place names, boundaries, buildings, road/street names, street addresses, or other features that clearly identify the project coverage area. Please be clear and concise and add any other information you feel is pertinent.

**Total number of eligible properties to be served:**

Provide information on what properties will be eligible for broadband under this project. Include what broadband speeds will be available to that property and what if any options for scalability there is. This can be provided on the map requirement above or on a separate map. Information that needs to be provided;

- Number of and location of properties that will be able to receive service of at least 10Mbps down and 5Mbps upload as a result of this broadband development grant project.
- Number of and location of properties that will be receiving less than 10Mbps down and 5Mbps upload but will be scalable to meet those speeds in the near future.
- Number of locations that will be receiving less than 10Mbps down and 5Mbps upload now and into the future.
- What is your estimated time table to meet 10Mbps down and 5Mbps upload for those properties not meeting those speeds.

**Project Costs,** Attach a list or schedule of all project elements including materials, equipment, design services, etc. to be purchased for the project. This will be used to determine the applicants match for this grant request.

**Attachments:** Please attach any additional information or use attachments for the application questions. Label each attachment for the question you are intending to provide information on.

