



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

4A

Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: September 11, 2018

Title of Item: Award Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	Action Requested: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft)	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing* <small>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</small>
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Submitted by: Ross Wagner	Department: Economic Development Coordinator
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Presenter (Name and Title): Ross Wagner, Economic Development & Forest Industry Coordinator	Estimated Time Needed: 20 Minutes
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Summary of Issue:
 At the July 24th County Board Meeting, the board agreed to award the 2018 Aitkin County Broadband Grant but to hold off on naming a recipient until the County's IRRRB Grant request was acted upon. As we now know, the IRRRB awarded Aitkin County \$150,000 to award all requests received for the the 2018 Aitkin County Broadband Grant. The Economic Development Committee therefore recommends that SCI Broadband Inc and Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative each be awarded an Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant of \$150,000.00.

Applications received from SCI Broadband and Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative and are detailed below, applications and the July 24th Memo are attached.

SCI Broadband, Inc	PROJECT COST	MATCH	AITKIN COUNTY	HOMES SERVES
Turner Township/Big Sandy Lake	\$111,593	\$66,956	\$44,637	121 homes, 1 business
Glen/Clear Lake	107,325	64,395	42,930	125 homes
Farm Island/Spirit Lake	94,810	56,885	37,924	84 homes
Workman/Big Sandy Lake	69,251	45,013	24,238	106 homes, 1 business
Totals	\$382,979	\$233,249	\$149,729	436 homes, 2 businesses
Mille Lacs Energy	\$370,000	\$220,000	\$150,000	347 homes

With this award, a total of 783 homes and 2 businesses will have a fiber network to their premise that will meet or exceed State of MN Broadband speed goals, total investment in Aitkin County is \$753,249.

Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:

Recommended Action/Motion:
 Approve grant request from SCI Broadband Inc and Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Financial Impact:
Is there a cost associated with this request? Yes No
What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$ 150,000.00
Is this budgeted? Yes No *Please Explain:*

Aitkin County Economic Development & Forest Industry Coordinator

Aitkin County Courthouse

Ross Wagner

217 Second Street N.W.

Aitkin, MN 56431

Phone: 218/927-7305

Fax: 218/927-7374

TO: Aitkin County Board of Commissioners

FROM: Ross Wagner, Economic Development & Forest Industry Coordinator

DATE: July 18, 2018

SUBJECT: Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant

In 2017 Aitkin County dedicated \$450,000.00 for a 3 year, Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant, to be funded at \$150,000/year. For 2018 applications were received from SCI Broadband and Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative and are detailed below.

SCI Broadband, Inc	<u>PROJECT COST</u>	<u>MATCH</u>	<u>AITKIN COUNTY</u>
Turner Township/Big Sandy Lake	\$111,593	\$66,956	\$44,637
Glen/Clear Lake	107,325	64,395	42,930
Farm Island/Spirit Lake	94,810	56,885	37,924
Workman/Big Sandy Lake	<u>69,251</u>	<u>45,013</u>	<u>24,238</u>
Totals	\$382,979	\$233,249	\$149,729

436 homes, 2 businesses

Mille Lacs Energy Coop	\$370,000	\$220,000	\$150,000
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347 homes

After much review and discussion, the Economic Development Committee recommends that Aitkin County award its 2018 Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant to SCI Broadband, Inc. SCI's proposals will reach 100 more homes and will spread the availability of Fiber to the Premise to more areas of Aitkin County. An example of spreading the fiber network is SCI's plan to bring fiber to the City of Palisade, reaching 110 homes/businesses.

The Broadband Development Grant Fund; In February, 2017 the Aitkin County Board authorized the formation of the Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant. With approximately \$525,000 in the dedicated Economic Development Fund, \$450,000 was set aside for a three year grant program offering \$150,000 for each of the three years. The Economic Development fund was established with funds that remained in the Aitkin County Loan Fund after that was disbanded. PILT payments that went into the Loan Fund were diverted to the General Fund for Levy relief and the balance was dedicated for Economic Development. In 2017, Aitkin County awarded \$150,000 to SCI for a Fiber to the Home network in parts of Shamrock Township and Wealthwood Township.

Broadband in Aitkin County; Though we are making progress, Aitkin County remains third to last of all counties with estimated availability of Wireline Broadband served households with at least 25 Mbps download/3 Mbps upload, at 45.68%. Some maps;

- 2018 Statewide, https://mn.gov/deed/assets/infrastructure-grant_tcm1045-134198.pdf
- 2018 by county, https://mn.gov/deed/assets/county-wireline_tcm1045-255857.pdf
- 2018 Aitkin Co., https://mn.gov/deed/assets/infrastructure-grant-aitkin_tcm1045-134106.pdf
- We have made progress, in 2016 at a lower speed threshold, we were at 27.48% of households served, https://mn.gov/deed/assets/infrastructure-grant-aitkin_tcm1045-134106.pdf

Though progress is and has been made, the same can be said about our neighbors, we still remain an island when it comes to broadband availability in the recreation and lakes area. This remains a concern and shows that there is still work to do.

Realtor and Business Owner experience; As I have mentioned in past discussions on the subject of broadband in Aitkin County, any realtor I have spoken with has mentioned losing prospective sales due to the lack of adequate broadband, including Rod Sparks. As a follow up, I recently spoke with Rod Sparks, Woods and Shores Realty, Aitkin, MN. Rod stated that access to broadband makes properties more valuable, “no question”. Rod has had “multiple” deals fall apart due to no or inadequate broadband. On a positive note, properties with good broadband access not only are more appealing, he notes several conversations with buyers who state they will be able to extend their weekends or vacations by being able to work from home or cabin. Wood and Shores reports that the same conversations and concerns with broadband extend to their commercial clients as well. One statement really stuck out to me, Rod said that virtually every client he talks to, asks, “What is the internet like at this property”.

Steve Kulifaj, Red Door Resort, Wealthwood, MN is another person I spoke with prior to being able to hook up to the SCI fiber. Steve was very frustrated that he could not get the broadband he needed for his resort. Not only could he not offer Wi-Fi, a must in the hospitality industry, he could hardly even get a signal for his cell phone. Approximately a year ago, Red Door got their broadband. It has been a “massive help to the resort and home”. Some of the improvements; high speed Wi-Fi, which they would have lost customers without; allows for training classes and work from home/resort; Wi-Fi now feeds the phone system so multiple lines and calls can be used along with more flexibility. “Getting broadband has been a life saver for us” stated Steve. They subscribed to satellite and tried other means, nothing else has worked.

Summary; As mentioned above, things are getting better in regards to broadband in Aitkin County. The 2017 grant to SCI will result in 324 homes/businesses in Shamrock Township/Bridge Road and 286 homes businesses in Wealthwood Township. With the anticipated award in 2018 the Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant will result in 1,048 homes and businesses served with a Fiber to the Premise network. This does not include work above and beyond the Aitkin County grants such as the State of Minnesota Border to Border grants and extensions to areas such as the Palisade example. I can not endorse this grant program enough, along with any Federal and State funds that are dedicated to providing broadband to rural areas. I look forward to one more year of the Aitkin County Broadband Development grant and more homes and businesses in Aitkin County with access to a fiber network.

Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant Application Form

Project Title: Aitkin County (Turner)

Name of Applicant Organization: Savage Communications Inc. DBA SCI Broadband

Applicant Primary Contact Person: Scott Savage

Applicant Address: 111 Tobies Mill Pl

City: Hinckley Zip Code: 55037

Telephone Number: 320-384-7442 Ext. 708 Email Address: ssavage@scicable.com

Authorized Signature: 

By signing this application on behalf of the above organization I am agreeing that I have the authority to do so and that all information contained in this application is true and accurate.

Description of your project, area to be covered, speeds that will be obtained now and in the future:

This project would include passing 121 homes and 1 Business with FTTH (Fiber to the Home) within Turner Township located in Aitkin County, MN. See attached map. SCI would offer residential customers with Internet speeds up to 250Mbps/20Mbps with infrastructure designed for up to 1Gig, Digital Phone service with unlimited long distance calling and Digital Cable TV services. Businesses will have access to dedicated Internet services up to 10Gig and phone service solutions including Hosted PBX and SIP Trunking. Below is our current residential speed offerings and Pricing.

Performance 15Mbps/3Mbps - \$39.95

Performance Plus 60Mbps/6Mbps - \$54.94

Performance Ultra 100Mbps/10Mbps - \$84.95

Performance Ultra 250Mbps/20Mbps - \$129.95

Description of need, why are Aitkin County funds necessary to complete this project:

SCI has been servicing rural communities in East Central and Northern Minnesota for over 30 years and with our experience the estimate of return for this project is low do to the low density and seasonal residents within the project area. See attached project costs and funding projections. The Aitkin Broadband grant would move the project into organizational return on investment expectations.

Provide information on any activities planned to actively promote the adoption of broadband services in the project area when the services become available: Include a description on any marketing and training programs on broadband applications for residents, businesses and institutions in the areas served by the project.

When project is nearing completion we plan to do a canvass marketing campaign for the homes passed within the project area including Direct Mailers, Door Tags and Signage.

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: \$111,593.00

Local/Provider match provided: \$66,956.00

County Funds Applied for: \$44,637.00

Other Funds applied for or anticipating to apply for: \$0

What is the source of these funds: *SCI Corporation Cash and Senior Debt.*

General Time Frame of Grant Project:

Starting upon approval of the broadband grant and execution of an agreement between parties; then ending within 12 months of said agreement

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. *See Attached Map*

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.
- Provide a three year work plan as it relates to your planned work in Aitkin County, it is our intention to not duplicate services in the same area. *See Attached Map*

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. *See Attached List of Projected Costs*

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.

Area: Turner**Homes Passed Data:**

Homes Passed (HP)	122
Homes Per Mile	30
Cost Per Home Passed	\$915
Cost Per Subscriber	\$1,829

Financial Data:

<u>Gross Revenue</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>HP</u>	<u>Subscribers</u>	<u>Avg MRC</u>	<u>Annualized</u>
Subscriber (Permanent)	12	20%	24	\$55	\$16,002
Subscriber (Seasonal)	6	30%	<u>37</u>	\$55	<u>\$12,001</u>
			61		\$28,003

EBITA (22% of Gross Revenue) \$6,161

Tax (\$118)
 Capital Improvement (Escrow) \$1,070

		<u>Term</u>	<u>Annualized</u>
Depreciation	\$66,956	10	\$6,696

<u>Funding Sources</u>		<u>Outlay</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Annualized Payment</u>
Grant	40%	\$44,637	NA	NA	NA
Savage Communications Inc	25%	\$27,898	NA	NA	NA
Senior Debt	35%	<u>\$39,058</u>	10	6%	\$5,208
Total		\$111,593			

Capital Outlay Data:

<u>Hub Equipment</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
OTN Cabinet	Unit	\$4,500	0	\$0
UPS	Unit	\$1,500	0	\$0
Backup Battery	Unit	\$985	0	\$0
Chassis/wPS	Unit	\$769	0	\$0
Forward Transmitter	Unit	\$3,610	0	\$0
EDFA (2 Port)	Unit	\$1,949	2	\$3,898
EDFA (1 Port)	Unit	\$1,195	0	\$0
Add Drop Filter (1610)	Unit	\$138	4	\$552
Return Transmitter	Unit	\$700	0	\$0
Receiver	Unit	\$535	0	<u>\$0</u>
Net				\$4,450

<u>Plant Infrastructure</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
Engineering/Field Staking	Mile	\$1,200	4	\$4,950
Last Mile Fiber Cable	Foot	\$0.25	21778	\$5,445
Labor	Foot	\$1.65	21778	\$35,934
Pedestal	Unit	\$124	68	\$8,432

Optical Splice Case	Unit	\$122	68	\$8,296
Optical Splice 1x2	Unit	\$29	15	\$442
Optical Splitter 1x8	Unit	\$60	8	<u>\$458</u>
Net				\$63,955

<u>Installation/CPE Equipment</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
Drop Fiber Cable	Foot	\$0.15	24400	\$3,660
Labor	Foot	\$0.65	24400	\$15,860
Demarcation Box	Unit	\$33	61	\$2,013
ONU	Unit	\$155	61	\$9,455
Modem	Unit	\$80	61	\$4,880
Activation	Unit	\$120	61	<u>\$7,320</u>
Net				\$43,188
Total (Capital Outlay)				\$111,593

<u>Map Data:</u>	<u>HP</u>	<u>Footage</u>	<u>Pedestal</u>
Turner Detail Map	122	21778	68

122 21778 68

Drop Data:

Average Distance	400
Drop Labor Cost	\$260.00



Big Sandy
Turner Twp

Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant Application Form

Project Title: Aitkin County (Glen)

Name of Applicant Organization: Savage Communications Inc. DBA SCI Broadband

Applicant Primary Contact Person: Scott Savage

Applicant Address: 111 Tobies Mill Pl

City: Hinckley Zip Code: 55037

Telephone Number: 320-384-7442 Ext. 708 Email Address: ssavage@scicable.com

Authorized Signature: 

By signing this application on behalf of the above organization I am agreeing that I have the authority to do so and that all information contained in this application is true and accurate.

Description of your project, area to be covered, speeds that will be obtained now and in the future:

This project would include passing 125 homes with FTTH (Fiber to the Home) within Glen Township located in Aitkin County, MN. See attached map. SCI would offer residential customers with Internet speeds up to 250Mbps/20Mbps with infrastructure designed for up to 1Gig, Digital Phone service with unlimited long distance calling and Digital Cable TV services. Businesses will have access to dedicated Internet services up to 10Gig and phone service solutions including Hosted PBX and SIP Trunking. Below is our current residential speed offerings and Pricing.

Performance 15Mbps/3Mbps - \$39.95

Performance Plus 60Mbps/6Mbps - \$54.94

Performance Ultra 100Mbps/10Mbps - \$84.95

Performance Ultra 250Mbps/20Mbps - \$129.95

Description of need, why are Aitkin County funds necessary to complete this project:

SCI has been servicing rural communities in East Central and Northern Minnesota for over 30 years and with our experience the estimate of return for this project is low do to the low density and seasonal residents within the project area. See attached project costs and funding projections. The Aitkin Broadband grant would move the project into organizational return on investment expectations.

Provide information on any activities planned to actively promote the adoption of broadband services in the project area when the services become available: Include a description on any marketing and training programs on broadband applications for residents, businesses and institutions in the areas served by the project.

When project is nearing completion we plan to do a canvass marketing campaign for the homes passed within the project area including Direct Mailers, Door Tags and Signage.

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: \$107,325.00

Local/Provider match provided: \$64,395.00

County Funds Applied for: \$42,930.00

Other Funds applied for or anticipating to apply for: \$0

What is the source of these funds: *SCI Corporation Cash and Senior Debt.*

General Time Frame of Grant Project:

Starting upon approval of the broadband grant and execution of an agreement between parties; then ending within 12 months of said agreement

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. *See Attached Map*

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.
- Provide a three year work plan as it relates to your planned work in Aitkin County, it is our intention to not duplicate services in the same area. *See Attached Map*

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. *See Attached List of Projected Costs*

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.

Area: Glen

Homes Passed Data:

Homes Passed (HP)	125
Homes Per Mile	34
Cost Per Home Passed	\$859
Cost Per Subscriber	\$1,717

Financial Data:

<u>Gross Revenue</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>HP</u>	<u>Subscribers</u>	<u>Avg MRC</u>	<u>Annualized</u>
Subscriber (Permanent)	12	20%	25	\$55	\$16,395
Subscriber (Seasonal)	6	30%	<u>38</u>	\$55	<u>\$12,296</u>
			63		\$28,691

EBITA (22% of Gross Revenue) \$6,312

Tax (\$28)

Capital Improvement (Escrow) \$1,336

		<u>Term</u>	<u>Annualized</u>
Depreciation	\$64,395	10	\$6,439

<u>Funding Sources</u>		<u>Outlay</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Annualized Payment</u>
Grant	40%	\$42,930	NA	NA	NA
Savage Communications Inc	25%	\$26,831	NA	NA	NA
Senior Debt	35%	<u>\$37,564</u>	10	6%	\$5,004
Total		\$107,325			

Capital Outlay Data:

<u>Hub Equipment</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
OTN Cabinet	Unit	\$4,500	0	\$0
UPS	Unit	\$1,500	0	\$0
Backup Battery	Unit	\$985	0	\$0
Chassis/wPS	Unit	\$769	0	\$0
Forward Transmitter	Unit	\$3,610	0	\$0
EDFA (2 Port)	Unit	\$1,949	2	\$3,898
EDFA (1 Port)	Unit	\$1,195	0	\$0
Add Drop Filter (1610)	Unit	\$138	4	\$552
Return Transmitter	Unit	\$700	0	\$0
Receiver	Unit	\$535	0	<u>\$0</u>
Net				\$4,450

<u>Plant Infrastructure</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
Engineering/Field Staking	Mile	\$1,200	4	\$4,430
Last Mile Fiber Cable	Foot	\$0.25	19493	\$4,873
Labor	Foot	\$1.65	19493	\$32,163
Pedestal	Unit	\$124	66	\$8,184

Optical Splice Case	Unit	\$122	66	\$8,052
Optical Splice 1x2	Unit	\$29	16	\$453
Optical Splitter 1x8	Unit	\$60	8	<u>\$469</u>
Net				\$58,625

<u>Installation/CPE Equipment</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
Drop Fiber Cable	Foot	\$0.15	25000	\$3,750
Labor	Foot	\$0.65	25000	\$16,250
Demarcation Box	Unit	\$33	62.5	\$2,063
ONU	Unit	\$155	62.5	\$9,688
Modem	Unit	\$80	62.5	\$5,000
Activation	Unit	\$120	62.5	<u>\$7,500</u>
Net				\$44,250

Total (Capital Outlay) \$107,325

<u>Map Data:</u>	<u>HP</u>	<u>Footage</u>	<u>Pedestal</u>
Glen Detail Map	125	19493	66

125 19493 66

Drop Data:

Average Distance	400
Drop Labor Cost	\$260.00

Clear LAKE
↓



Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant Application Form

Project Title: Aitkin County (Farm Island)

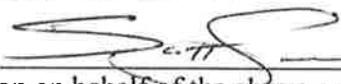
Name of Applicant Organization: Savage Communications Inc. DBA SCI Broadband

Applicant Primary Contact Person: Scott Savage

Applicant Address: 111 Tobies Mill Pl

City: Hinckley Zip Code: 55037

Telephone Number: 320-384-7442 Ext. 708 Email Address: ssavage@scicable.com

Authorized Signature: 

By signing this application on behalf of the above organization I am agreeing that I have the authority to do so and that all information contained in this application is true and accurate.

Description of your project, area to be covered, speeds that will be obtained now and in the future:

This project would include passing 84 homes with FTTH (Fiber to the Home) within Farm Island Township located in Aitkin County, MN. See attached map. SCI would offer residential customers with Internet speeds up to 250Mbps/20Mbps with infrastructure designed for up to 1Gig, Digital Phone service with unlimited long distance calling and Digital Cable TV services. Businesses will have access to dedicated Internet services up to 10Gig and phone service solutions including Hosted PBX and SIP Trunking. Below is our current residential speed offerings and Pricing.

Performance 15Mbps/3Mbps - \$39.95

Performance Plus 60Mbps/6Mbps - \$54.94

Performance Ultra 100Mbps/10Mbps - \$84.95

Performance Ultra 250Mbps/20Mbps - \$129.95

Description of need, why are Aitkin County funds necessary to complete this project:

SCI has been servicing rural communities in East Central and Northern Minnesota for over 30 years and with our experience the estimate of return for this project is low do to the low density and seasonal residents within the project area. See attached project costs and funding projections. The Aitkin Broadband grant would move the project into organizational return on investment expectations.

Provide information on any activities planned to actively promote the adoption of broadband services in the project area when the services become available: Include a description on any marketing and training programs on broadband applications for residents, businesses and institutions in the areas served by the project.

When project is nearing completion we plan to do a canvass marketing campaign for the homes passed within the project area including Direct Mailers, Door Tags and Signage.

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: \$94,810.00

Local/Provider match provided: \$56,885.00

County Funds Applied for: \$37,924.00

Other Funds applied for or anticipating to apply for: \$0

What is the source of these funds: *SCI Corporation Cash and Senior Debt.*

General Time Frame of Grant Project:

Starting upon approval of the broadband grant and execution of an agreement between parties; then ending within 12 months of said agreement

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. *See Attached Map*

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.
- Provide a three year work plan as it relates to your planned work in Aitkin County, it is our intention to not duplicate services in the same area. *See Attached Map*

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. *See Attached List of Projected Costs*

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.

Area: Farm Island

Homes Passed Data:

Homes Passed (HP)	84
Homes Per Mile	20
Cost Per Home Passed	\$1,129
Cost Per Subscriber	\$2,257

Financial Data:

<u>Gross Revenue</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>HP</u>	<u>Subscribers</u>	<u>Avg MRC</u>	<u>Annualized</u>
Subscriber (Permanent)	12	20%	17	\$55	\$11,017
Subscriber (Seasonal)	6	30%	<u>25</u>	\$55	<u>\$8,263</u>
			42		\$19,281

EBITA (22% of Gross Revenue) \$4,242

Tax (\$318)
Capital Improvement (Escrow) \$144

		<u>Term</u>	<u>Annualized</u>
Depreciation	\$56,886	10	\$5,689

<u>Funding Sources</u>		<u>Outlay</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Annualized Payment</u>
Grant	40%	\$37,924	NA	NA	NA
Savage Communications Inc	25%	\$23,702	NA	NA	NA
Senior Debt	35%	<u>\$33,183</u>	10	6%	\$4,416
Total		\$94,810			

Capital Outlay Data:

<u>Hub Equipment</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
OTN Cabinet	Unit	\$4,500	0	\$0
UPS	Unit	\$1,500	0	\$0
Backup Battery	Unit	\$985	0	\$0
Chassis/wPS	Unit	\$769	0	\$0
Forward Transmitter	Unit	\$3,610	0	\$0
EDFA (2 Port)	Unit	\$1,949	1	\$1,949
EDFA (1 Port)	Unit	\$1,195	1	\$1,195
Add Drop Filter (1610)	Unit	\$138	3	\$414
Return Transmitter	Unit	\$700	0	\$0
Receiver	Unit	\$535	0	<u>\$0</u>
Net				\$3,558

<u>Plant Infrastructure</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
Engineering/Field Staking	Mile	\$1,200	4	\$5,008
Last Mile Fiber Cable	Foot	\$0.25	22035	\$5,509
Labor	Foot	\$1.65	22035	\$36,358
Pedestal	Unit	\$124	57	\$7,068

Optical Splice Case	Unit	\$122	57	\$6,954
Optical Splice 1x2	Unit	\$29	11	\$305
Optical Splitter 1x8	Unit	\$60	5	<u>\$315</u>
Net				\$61,516

<u>Installation/CPE Equipment</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
Drop Fiber Cable	Foot	\$0.15	16800	\$2,520
Labor	Foot	\$0.65	16800	\$10,920
Demarcation Box	Unit	\$33	42	\$1,386
ONU	Unit	\$155	42	\$6,510
Modem	Unit	\$80	42	\$3,360
Activation	Unit	\$120	42	<u>\$5,040</u>
Net				\$29,736

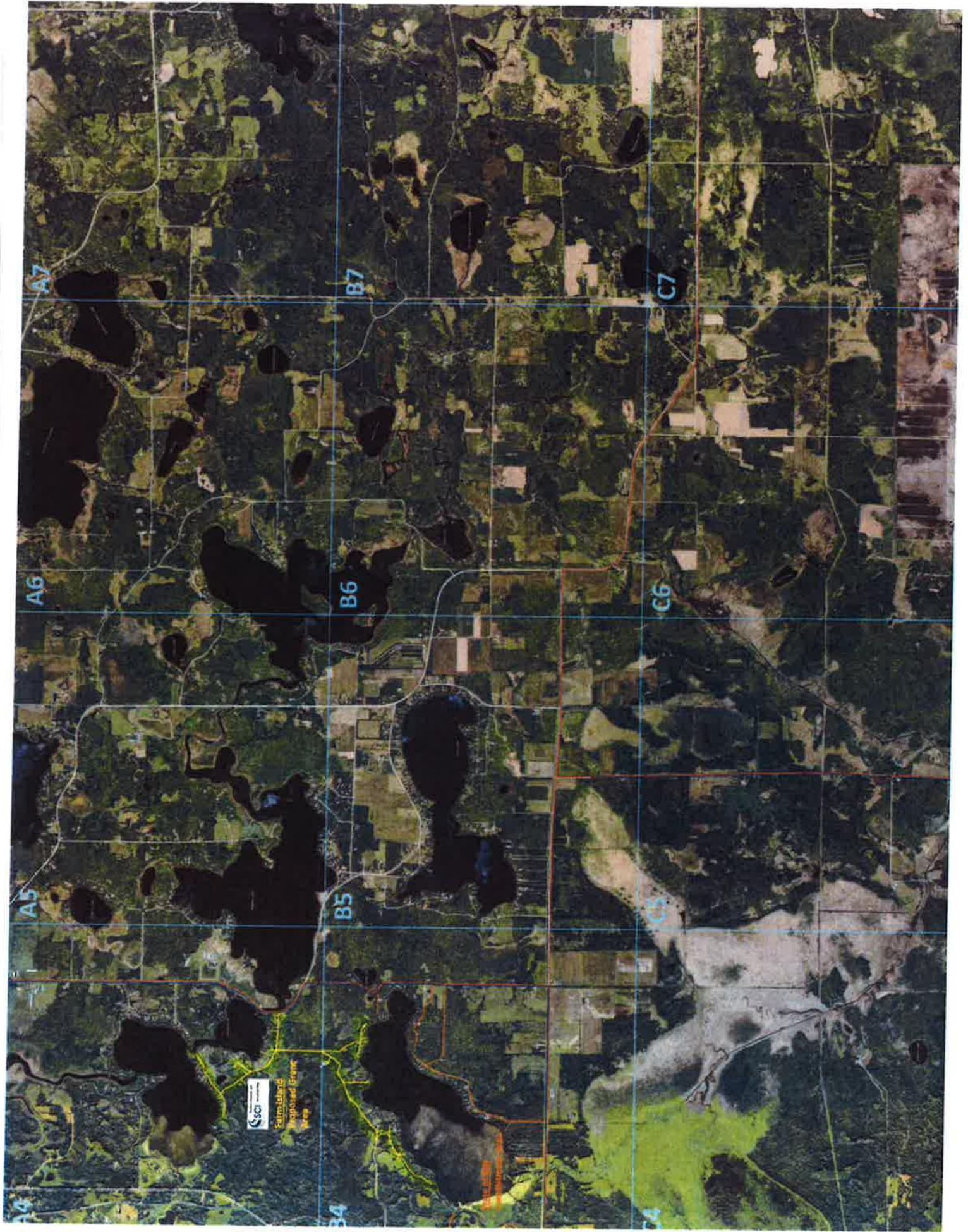
Total (Capital Outlay) **\$94,810**

<u>Map Data:</u>	<u>HP</u>	<u>Footage</u>	<u>Pedestal</u>
Farm Island Detail Map	84	22035	57

84 22035 57

Drop Data:

Average Distance 400





Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant Application Form

Project Title: Aitkin County (Workman)

Name of Applicant Organization: Savage Communications Inc. DBA SCI Broadband

Applicant Primary Contact Person: Scott Savage

Applicant Address: 111 Tobies Mill Pl

City: Hinckley Zip Code: 55037

Telephone Number: 320-384-7442 Ext. 708 Email Address: ssavage@scicable.com

Authorized Signature:



By signing this application on behalf of the above organization I am agreeing that I have the authority to do so and that all information contained in this application is true and accurate.

Description of your project, area to be covered, speeds that will be obtained now and in the future:

This project would include passing 106 homes and 1 Business with FTTH (Fiber to the Home) within Workman Township located in Aitkin County, MN. See attached map. SCI would offer residential customers with Internet speeds up to 250Mbps/20Mbps with infrastructure designed for up to 1Gig, Digital Phone service with unlimited long distance calling and Digital Cable TV services. Businesses will have access to dedicated Internet services up to 10Gig and phone service solutions including Hosted PBX and SIP Trunking. Below is our current residential speed offerings and Pricing.

Performance 15Mbps/3Mbps - \$39.95

Performance Plus 60Mbps/6Mbps - \$54.94

Performance Ultra 100Mbps/10Mbps - \$84.95

Performance Ultra 250Mbps/20Mbps - \$129.95

Description of need, why are Aitkin County funds necessary to complete this project:

SCI has been servicing rural communities in East Central and Northern Minnesota for over 30 years and with our experience the estimate of return for this project is low do to the low density and seasonal residents within the project area. See attached project costs and funding projections. The Aitkin Broadband grant would move the project into organizational return on investment expectations.

Provide information on any activities planned to actively promote the adoption of broadband services in the project area when the services become available: Include a description on any marketing and training programs on broadband applications for residents, businesses and institutions in the areas served by the project.

When project is nearing completion we plan to do a canvass marketing campaign for the homes passed within the project area including Direct Mailers, Door Tags and Signage.

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: \$69,251.00

Local/Provider match provided: \$45,013.00

County Funds Applied for: \$24,238.00

Other Funds applied for or anticipating to apply for: \$0

What is the source of these funds: *SCI Corporation Cash and Senior Debt.*

General Time Frame of Grant Project:

Starting upon approval of the broadband grant and execution of an agreement between parties; then ending within 12 months of said agreement

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. *See Attached Map*

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.
- Provide a three year work plan as it relates to your planned work in Aitkin County, it is our intention to not duplicate services in the same area. *See Attached Map*

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. *See Attached List of Projected Costs*

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.

Area: Workman

Homes Passed Data:

Homes Passed (HP)	107
Homes Per Mile	63
Cost Per Home Passed	\$647
Cost Per Subscriber	\$1,294

Financial Data:

<u>Gross Revenue</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>HP</u>	<u>Subscribers</u>	<u>Avg MRC</u>	<u>Annualized</u>
Subscriber (Permanent)	12	20%	21	\$55	\$14,034
Subscriber (Seasonal)	6	30%	<u>32</u>	\$55	<u>\$10,526</u>
			54		\$24,560

EBITA (22% of Gross Revenue) \$5,403

Tax \$198
Capital Improvement (Escrow) \$1,509

		<u>Term</u>	<u>Annualized</u>
Depreciation	\$45,013	10	\$4,501

<u>Funding Sources</u>		<u>Outlay</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Annualized Payment</u>
Grant	35%	\$24,238	NA	NA	NA
Savage Communications Inc	25%	\$17,313	NA	NA	NA
Senior Debt	40%	<u>\$27,700</u>	10	6%	\$3,696
Total		\$69,251			

Capital Outlay Data:

<u>Hub Equipment</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
OTN Cabinet	Unit	\$4,500	0	\$0
UPS	Unit	\$1,500	0	\$0
Backup Battery	Unit	\$985	0	\$0
Chassis/wPS	Unit	\$769	0	\$0
Forward Transmitter	Unit	\$3,610	0	\$0
EDFA (2 Port)	Unit	\$1,949	2	\$3,898
EDFA (1 Port)	Unit	\$1,195	0	\$0
Add Drop Filter (1610)	Unit	\$138	4	\$552
Return Transmitter	Unit	\$700	0	\$0
Receiver	Unit	\$535	0	<u>\$0</u>
Net				\$4,450

<u>Plant Infrastructure</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
Engineering/Field Staking	Mile	\$600	2	\$1,015
Last Mile Fiber Cable	Foot	\$0.25	8934	\$2,234
Labor	Foot	\$1.35	8934	\$12,061
Pedestal	Unit	\$124	44	\$5,456

Optical Splice Case	Unit	\$122	44	\$5,368
Optical Splice 1x2	Unit	\$29	13	\$388
Optical Splitter 1x8	Unit	\$60	7	<u>\$401</u>
Net				\$26,923

<u>Installation/CPE Equipment</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	
Drop Fiber Cable	Foot	\$0.15	21400	\$3,210
Labor	Foot	\$0.65	21400	\$13,910
Demarcation Box	Unit	\$33	53.5	\$1,766
ONU	Unit	\$155	53.5	\$8,293
Modem	Unit	\$80	53.5	\$4,280
Activation	Unit	\$120	53.5	<u>\$6,420</u>
Net				\$37,878

Total (Capital Outlay) **\$69,251**

<u>Map Data:</u>	<u>HP</u>	<u>Footage</u>	<u>Pedestal</u>
Workman Detail Map	107	8934	44

107 8934 44

Drop Data:

Average Distance	400
Drop Labor Cost	\$260.00



Big Sandy Lake
Workman Twp

COOPERATION AMONGST COOPERATIVES



AITKIN COUNTY BROADBAND
DEVELOPMENT GRANT
PHASE II FIBER TO THE PREMISE IN AITKIN COUNTY

Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant Application

Project Title: MLEC Phase II FTTP Project

Name of Applicant Organization: Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Applicant Primary Contact Person:

Stacy Cluff

Applicant Address: 36559 US Hwy 169

City: Aitkin **Zip Code:** 56431

Telephone Number: 218-927-2191 **Email Address:** scluff@mlecmn.com

Authorized Signature:



Brian Zelenak

MLEC General Manager

By signing this application on behalf of the above organization, I am agreeing that I have the authority to do so and that all information contained in this application is true and accurate.

Description of your project, area to be covered, speeds that will be obtained now and in the future:

Organization Overview

Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative (MLEC) is applying for an Aitkin County Broadband Development Grant to aid in the building a state-of-the-art Fiber-to-the-Premise (FTTP) network in rural Aitkin County. For this project, MLEC is partnering with Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC) in the same way MLEC and CTC partnered on the MLEC Phase I FTTP project, which was awarded Border-to-Border grant funds from the State of Minnesota.

MLEC and CTC are collaborating to deploy much needed broadband across Aitkin County. The two non-profit cooperatives have similar mission statements, which dictate the respective organizations' goals to provide reliable and competitively

priced services that meet the needs of our members and customers, not to generate profit. Together, the cooperatives have established a trusting relationship. MLEC has been a provider of electricity to rural Aitkin County for over 80 years and has been offering various Internet services for years for over 20 years. With CTC's assistance, has now become a provider of services using fiber optics. CTC's success constructing and offering service over fiber optics has been well demonstrated. CTC has invested over \$70 million to upgrade its copper networks to FTTP. Each project has been constructed under budget and ahead of schedule. In addition, CTC has been awarded multiple grants over the years to help expand the CTC fiber optic network to areas where incumbent providers have not previously provided quality services. Like CTC's FTTP network, MLEC's FTTP project is capable of providing 1 Gbps symmetrical broadband to the customers within the project area.

As a member-owned rural electric cooperative, MLEC has been a long-time active supporter of the residents and business of Aitkin County – giving back to the communities we serve both in terms of dollars and labor. MLEC operates by the Seven Cooperative Principles:

1. Open and Voluntary Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Members' Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

MLEC has always been in the forefront of bringing needed services to its membership. As a diversified service offering, MLEC started providing Internet service to the area through the means of satellite and fixed wireless years ago. These were offered because there were no other providers willing to bring high-speed Internet to the area. MLEC has continued that commitment to provide broadband Internet and will continue to expand the Phase I FTTP that will be completed this year. When designing our fiber network and our next projects, we focus on serving **everyone** within a geographic region, not just the highest density areas. While this is costlier, it ensures that all our rural members have access to the broadband they need. Many other providers do not have this philosophy and just target areas with high density. Acceptance of this business model only

encourages that those living in the less dense rural area without service today, will be continuing to receive inadequate service into the future.

Speeds and Pricing

MLEC offers the following packages for Broadband services:

Broadband Internet Packages	Pricing
Up to 50 Mbps symmetrical	\$50.00/month
Up to 250 Mbps symmetrical	\$85.00/month
Up to 500 Mbps symmetrical	\$100.00/month
Up to 1 Gbps symmetrical	\$150.00/month

Project Location

The MLEC Phase II FTTP project area is located in Farm Island Township in Aitkin County. The project will be an extension of the Minnesota Border-to-Border project that is currently in the final construction phases. Over 380 customers have signed up for service and will be connected this summer. MLEC is poised to begin construction on the project upon receipt of this grant. MLEC will have consulted with engineering and possible construction contractors and be prepared to start offering services using Aitkin County grant funds in approximately 6 months from the time an award is made. See Attachment 1 for the detailed location of the project area and Attachment 2 for a project timeline.

Depending on the goals of the county, MLEC is open to alter the proposed project to meet the needs. Our long-term goal is keep expanding our Phase I project and we will be open to discuss our plans and the project with the selection committee if needed.

Description of need; why are Aitkin County funds necessary to complete this project:

MLEC and CTC are committed cooperative partners, that together are finding ways to deliver fiber optics to the citizens of Aitkin County. The availability of high-speed broadband service to households will provide residents with access to a vast array of new information and resources relating directly to education,

telehealth, potential employment, economic development, and business opportunities, as well as additional sources of news, entertainment and other activities. Based on the engineering design completed, the total eligible infrastructure costs to build FTTP for the proposed grant project would be \$370,000. MLEC's grant request is for \$150,000, with the remaining being self-funded by MLEC.

MLEC has determined it would be too costly to build a network capable of delivering dedicated broadband speeds up to 1 Gbps download/upload, without grant funding assistance. This project, therefore, could not continue without the full support from Aitkin County.

Based on the decades of CTC experience building FTTP networks, it is known that the most efficient use of capital dollars enables the greatest number of customers having the opportunity to receive gigabit services over the network. It is for this reason that MLEC is requesting the full \$150,000 available from Aitkin County in 2018. By providing all funds to one entity, the county grant funds are used for engineering and construction expenses one time versus funding the same activities with each award it might otherwise distribute. Aitkin County will receive the greatest value and the most connected customers by awarding the full funds requested to MLEC in partnership with CTC. With funding the full \$150,000 to MLEC, Aitkin County is also keeping county funds local with this project. Both MLEC and CTC support local jobs by having numerous staff who live, work, and are active in Aitkin County communities. The use of vendors and contractors who are part of our local communities are used when possible. By funding MLEC, the county is not only funding FTTP, but also contributing to local economic prosperity instead of funding for profit, non-local providers.

As we experienced with our Border-to-Border grant project, the project dollars have a ripple impact on the local economy by housing contractors during the week at local hotels and with the associated meals, gas and entertainment dollars spent locally during the construction period. These economic impacts are significant to the local economy during the construction phase and should not be overlooked.

Provide information on any activities planned to actively promote the adoption of broadband services in the project area when the services become available:

MLEC will utilize many of the approaches we have found to be successful in our Border-to-Border grant project and CTC has found to be most successful in other projects. These include multiple avenues to communicate to potential new homes and businesses within a service area, including the website portal called CrowdFiber. This site allows MLEC and CTC to gather interest in broadband Internet and other services from those within and near the project area to begin planning for future FTTP expansion. Available on the site is information about the project, services, and pricing, along with the ability for residents to make comments and receive updates. Those signing-up on the site can also help promote the project with a click of a button on social media and via e-mail to help “crowdsource” the project and, therefore, spur providers such as MLEC, in partnership with CTC, to grow the project area.

MLEC will promote the FTTP project with several different tactics including personalized letters, postcards, yard signs and door-to-door efforts. We will also hold town hall type meetings and promote the project on our website. CTC will provide MLEC with CTC’s library of customer support materials and user guides to assist customers with connecting devices and a variety of how-to guides.

MLEC will invite residents in the project area to stop at our office to ask questions or try out the service using computers we have made available in our lobby. This will let people experience FTTP and see what it is all about. The incredible speed and low latency provide the best Internet customer experience. MLEC will capitalize on the synergies created from MLEC’s Phase I Minnesota Border-to-Border grant project. MLEC is a well-respected, long-term, active member of all the communities we serve. We sponsor many area events, donate to charitable causes, and MLEC and our employees participate in many local activities.

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: \$370,000

Local/Provider match provided: \$220,000

County Funds Applied for: \$150,000

Other Funds applied for or anticipating applying for:

If awarded the Aitkin County grant, MLEC will review its options and apply for additional funding to expand the project based on funding availability. At this time the Minnesota DEED's Border-to-Border program has not been funded with grant money for 2018. However, to the extent additional grant dollars become available through legislature or from the underspending on previously awarded Border-to-Border grant projects, MLEC is prepared to double the size of this project up to \$700,00 for Phase IV of the MLEC FTTP build.

What is the source of these funds:

Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative, Minnesota Border-to-Border Development Grant funds as available, and other sources as available.

General Time Frame of Grant Project:

Starting: August 2018 Ending: July 2019

Location(s) of your project:

See Attachment 1 for map detail and location of project area.

Total number of eligible properties to be served.

- The MLEC Phase II FTTP project will pass 347 properties that have electric service or a source of power available. All of these properties will be able to receive up to 1 Gbps symmetrical service utilizing the MLEC fiber optic network.
- The Aitkin County grant project is phase II of our FTTP projects. MLEC is committed to expanding the fiber network throughout Aitkin County. In addition, MLEC needs broadband communication to substations for future electric smart grid automation. Future plans are to build fiber to all ten of our substations in the next five to ten years. Those in Aitkin County include Aitkin, Palisade, Kimberly, McGregor, Glen and Opstead substations. The fiber build-out will provide capacity for connecting customers along all the routes. This will allow MLEC to reach a broader range of customers by having a fiber backbone in place.
- MLEC is also pledging \$150,000 for the 2019 Aitkin County grant process to continue the expansion of Phase I and II projects. If chosen, MLEC would leverage the Aitkin County funding to commit \$300,000 or more, per year, on fiber expansion in rural Aitkin County.
- MLEC will continue to seek additional future grant dollars, should they be available from the Minnesota Office of Broadband Development, Rural Utilities Services (RUS) and any other sources of funding available.
- Planning has begun on our Phase III project. MLEC has plans to work in conjunction with GRE and Enbridge, if the PUC approves the Enbridge Line 3 replacement, to bring FTTP to all the homes along U.S. Highway 169 for approximately 12 miles to the north, in addition providing service to all the homes around Esquagamah, Round and Waukenabo lakes. New transmission lines are needed to bring power to the proposed Enbridge pumping stations needed for the new Line 3 expansion. MLEC has already reached an agreement with GRE to place fiber on the poles of the new transmission lines that will be needed. (Confidential until publicly announced by MLEC)

- A future Phase IV project would include filling in the areas from our Phase I and II projects from County Road 28 and going north, up to the City of Aitkin.

MLEC Phase II FTTP Project Costs:

Project Expenses	Source of Funds		
	Aitkin County	MLEC	Total
OSP Construction (All Last Mile)	\$108,500	\$168,500	\$277,000
Home Investigations/Cutover/Activation	\$11,730	\$15,500	\$27,230
Electrician	\$129	\$250	\$379
Electronics	\$10,589	\$13,500	\$24,089
Connectivity/Cabinetry	\$2,412	\$3,500	\$5,912
Permits	\$370	\$400	\$770
Engineering	\$16,270	\$18,350	\$34,620
Project Total	\$150,000	\$220,000	\$370,000

Attachment 1: Project Map



Attachment 2: Project Schedule

Project Tasks	2018							2019						
	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July
Pre Project Engineering & Planning	■	■												
Project Awarded by County (Estimated)		■												
Funds Available from County (Estimated)			■											
Detailed Field Engineering & Mapping		■	■											
Utility Permits & Agreements		■	■	■										
Construction Bidding			■	■										
Material Order & Delivery			■	■	■									
Fiber Construction				■	■	■	■							
Fiber Splicing & Acceptance Testing					■	■	■	■						
Engineering & Mapping As-Built Record Updates								■	■					
Construction Project Contract Close Out												■	■	
Customer Installations								■	■	■	■	■	■	
Last Location Turned Up													■	
Grant Contract Closeout with County														■

Attachment 3: Project area customer testimonials and support

Phase II Fiber to the Premises

Subject: Broadband

I have owned a cabin in Shingwauk Village since 1986. I love Aitkin County and the beauty of the area. However, it is becoming more and more difficult in this technological era to function without WI-FI connections. Please do whatever is in your power to include this part of Aitkin - 6 miles south of Aitkin off Hwy 169 - in a grant extending WI-FI to this area.

**Thank you,
Bernice Berns
42915 303rd Lane
Aitkin, MN**

**I am probably already on your list begging for broadband to the Shingwauk Village area. It would be beneficial to our community and would get a lot of use. This is a small consolidated area with many internet users. Many who are coming from the cities to use their cabins and who will come more often and spend more money in Aitkin if they can finish their work using internet at their cabins! There is a lot of improvement going on at Shingwauk that is adding value to the area and broadband will also help boost property values. All good things!
Margaret Meyer**

Attachment 3: Continued

5/29/17

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of the grant proposal to Aitkin County by Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative for funds to extend fiber optic broadband service to the Shingwauk Village area of Farm Island Township.

A fiber network would have a definite impact for me, providing the capabilities to spend more time in Aitkin by allowing us to conduct some of our work from our home in Shingwauk Village.

My husband and I own a business providing counseling and educational services. Many of our clients need legal documents prior to going to court, so we must be able to respond in writing and send electronic communications in a timely manner. Our business also has an online presence that must be maintained.

Additionally, I have an online ecommerce business. I need internet access to be able to communicate and process orders for customers.

Our current lack of true high-speed and affordable broadband definitely puts limits on residents and businesses. Greater access and bandwidth enable enhanced communication, possibilities of remote work access and local business opportunities that can keep young people in the local area while attracting others to the Aitkin community.

The advantages of fiber-optic broadband are significant. Without the grant, none of the advantages of broadband may be realized. It appears to be cost prohibitive for our community to build fiber networks without such financial support.

Please award MLEC the funds needed to extend fiber optic lines for high-speed Internet to our home.

Sincerely,

Kay Elliott
42774 303rd Ave N, Aitkin, MN

763-566-2013

kaycelllott@msn.com

