

**Minnesota Community Development Block Grant
COVID-19 (CDBG-CV)**

Broadband Development Application

Minnesota Community Development Block Grant COVID-19 (CDBG-CV) guidance is located on DEED website at <https://mn.gov/deed/government/financial-assistance/community-funding/small-cities.jsp>. This application packet is only for Broadband Development. Other eligible program component applications are available on the same website as the guidance.

The *Minnesota CDBG-CV* Program is designed to help non-entitlement and entitlement communities or counties to prepare, prevent, or respond to the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. The activities must be most critical to their locality and primarily for their low-and moderate-income residents.

The *Minnesota CDBG-CV* Program will be managed by the Office of Community Finance’s Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) unit. Projects associated with this Broadband Development Application will be funded with CDBG-CV funding. This one-time program is specifically aimed to award funding for broadband development projects that assist qualified communities in preparing for, preventing, and responding to COVID-19. The *Border to Border Broadband Development Grant Program* managed by the Office of Broadband Development is a separate broadband development program. Those interest in that program are directed to visit the [Office of Broadband Development webpage](#) for more information.

Broadband Development Activities

Grantees may utilize funding to provide new or increased access to broadband to support telework, telemedicine, telelearning, and/or televisits. All activities must result in a National Objective by providing new or enhanced broadband infrastructure and or components to low-to-moderate income (LMI) persons/households. For activities installing broadband infrastructure, the National Objective is met on an area basis (LMA). Activities associated with service/communication enhancements must benefit LMI persons/households.

Total allocation of CDBG-CV funds available towards Broadband Development projects is \$25,468,807.24. The Broadband Development activities may request an assumed maximum of \$5,000,000 per project. Broadband Development project includes installation of broadband infrastructure and other broadband related activities (example: telelearning, nursing home virtual visits, and other approved telecommunicating activities).

Activity	Description
Installation of broadband infrastructure	Installation of broadband infrastructure in areas with either download/upload speeds under the State’s goal or lacking broadband connectivity. Installation of infrastructure will enhance internet access to unserved and underserved areas to support the increased connectivity for telework, telemedicine, telelearning, and virtual visits/gatherings. Infrastructure may be in the form of last mile, middle mile, or tower installation. Last mile includes, but is not limited to, installation of lines to residential structures or nursing homes. CDBG-CV funding may be used towards the installation of main fiber lines, lines to towers and tower installation. Middle mile and tower installation will be allowed if last mile infrastructure will be included and will serve as the final leg in connecting the broadband network to end-users. Costs associated with the purchase of equipment for wireless broadband activities and broadband services are ineligible.
Communication Enhancements to end user	Other broadband related activities include activities in addition to the installation of main broadband lines and towers. Installation of lines to commercial, industrial or public buildings are ineligible. Service payments and purchasing/installing of equipment to transmit or receive broadband service are also ineligible.

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Broadband Development

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Applicant must submit two (2) application packets (1 original and 1 copy) of the application on/before June 1, 2021.
- Applicant must be an eligible non-entitlement general unit of local government or an entitlement community
- Applications must tie back to activities which prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic.
- Activities must meet the low-to-moderate income National Objective. For LMA, at least 51% of the residents in an area must be LMI persons or LMC where benefits are provided to specific groups of persons. Installation to end user must benefit LMI persons.
- Applications must clearly indicate all the *Minnesota CDBG-CV* activities proposed.
- The *Minnesota CDBG-CV* funding request per grantee/activity is described below:
 - The Broadband Development: assumed maximum of \$5,000,000 per project.
- Depending on the activities proposed, items must be competitively procured whether by bid or quote.
- There is no match requirement under the CDBG-CV program.

ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS FOR THE BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION

The following documents should be attached after the fully completed Broadband Development Application in the order the documents are listed below.

☒ MAP OF PROPOSED SERVICE AREA

See Attachment A – Map of Proposed Service Area

☒ UNSERVED/UNDERSERVED AREA MAP FOR PROPOSED SERVICE AREA

Using the map application found at <http://map.connectmn.org/>, create and attach a map of the proposed service area overlaying the “Unserviced & Underserved Areas” layer. To display unserved and underserved areas, select the “Underserved & Unserviced Areas” layer within the *Access* field (upper left corner of screen). On the map display, click the “Draw” feature (paint palette icon) located near the top left of the map display to access the map draw feature. The proposed service areas should be drawn using either the circle, ellipse, polygon, or freehand polygon draw mode. In addition, the blue or red border preview design (located on the fourth row of the preview icon list) should be used. Maps may be generated and printed under the *Export Map* tab which can be found to the left of the Legend field.

See Attachment B – Proposed Service Area Unserviced/Underserved

☒ LMA PERCENTAGE DETERMINATION MAP

Note: If the service area is under 51% LMI the project does not meet the LMA criteria and is ineligible to receive funding.

To calculate the LMA percentage for the proposed service area, visit the HUD [Map Application](#). A brief video explaining how to utilize the map can be found on the [CDBG Low- and Moderate-Income Data - HUD Exchange](#) webpage. To start the video, click the video thumbnail or the “Demonstrating Area Benefit to Low and Moderate Income Persons” text. Video times applicable to using the mapping application can be found from 16:50 (16 minutes, 50 seconds) to 17:30 and specific information for calculating the LMA percentage with the mapping application can be found from 18:37 to 21:18.

See Attachment C –LMA Area Map

✕ LMA PERCENTAGE DETERMINATION SPREADSHEET

The spreadsheet is generated using the Map Application noted above. The spreadsheet should show the calculated LMA percentage for the proposed service area. The calculation is described from 20:30 to 21:18 in the video noted in the “LMA PERCENTAGE DETERMINATION MAP” section.

See Attachment C.1 - LMA Percentage Determination

✕ FIVE-YEAR STAND-ALONE FINANCIAL ANALYSIS DOCUMENTATION

- Pro-forma spreadsheet or narrative summarizing the financial analysis for the proposed project, including a description of how the costs and anticipated revenue will result in the financial viability of the project.

See Attachment D - Financial Pro-forma

See Attachment D.2 - Project Financial Narrative

□ CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE STATEMENT FOR THE BROADBAND SERVICE PROVIDER

- Use the template on the [SCDP website](#) under the *Apply* tab

See Attachment E – Conflict of Interest Disclosure

**Minnesota Community Development Block Grant
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**Broadband Development
Program Application**

PROJECT TITLE: Aitkin County and MLEC Connecting Quality of Life with Broadband

PROJECT NEED

- 1. Select the option from the list below that best fits the Broadband installation activity that is proposed for this project (choose one):**

- Last Mile Components not including tower installation
 Last Mile Components including tower installation
 Last Mile and Middle Mile Components not including tower installation
 Last Mile and Middle Mile including tower installation

Description: Last mile components are broadband infrastructure that serves as the final leg connecting the broadband service provider's network to the end-user customer's on-premise telecommunications equipment. Middle mile components are broadband infrastructure that links a broadband service provider's core network infrastructure to last mile infrastructure.

In addition, will this project include a Communication Enhancement Component?

- Yes No

- 2. Briefly describe the proposed service area (reference the map of the proposed service area) that will be affected by this project. When describing the area, indicate if any of the covered jurisdictions have taken any past actions to apply for funding or finance a broadband project.**

The proposed project location is located in southeast Aitkin County and encompasses portions of the following townships: Idun, Pliny, Rice River, Seavey, White Pine and Williams, including the town of McGrath. *See Attachment A – Map of Proposed Service Area.* This is in an RDOF area, not serviced by MLEC. If awarded CDBG dollars, the County will work with the RDOF award winner to remove the proposed service area from their RDOF responsibility.

- 3. Unserved and Underserved Documentation**

Based on the Unserved/Underserved area map, the proposed service area covers:

- Unserved Area only
 Underserved Area only
 Both unserved and underserved areas
 Neither unserved or underserved areas

4. Determine the low-to-moderate income (LMI) percentage for the entire proposed service area.

Based on the LMA percentage determination spreadsheet, the LMA percentage for the proposed service area is:

54.88%

5. Describe the need for broadband infrastructure and how it benefits the overall community, in preventing, preparing for, or responding to COVID-19, within the service area. The response should include how the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the need for broadband infrastructure.

Access to broadband is as imperative today as electricity was 75 years ago. A reliable fiber optic network is the backbone necessary to provide rural resident access to the benefits of unlimited bandwidth, cost efficiency and reliability. Residents in our proposed project area do not have access to quality or affordable Internet service for everyday needs and essential services. Furthermore, in most areas of the proposed project it is not even an option for them to receive a wireline Internet service. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that broadband is no longer a luxury utility, but a requirement to meet daily needs. Distance learning is now the new normal, not just for K-12, but for higher education across the country. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly shown that residents lacking access to broadband have and will continue to fall farther behind in education. The past year, telemedicine has emerged as a critical tool in healthcare to reach more patients and to help keep people safe in their homes. The need for symmetrical speeds has also become evident as the use of Zoom and other virtual platforms are being used not only for distance learning but for telehealth visits. The healthcare industry has relied heavily on these platforms to see patients. There are many stories of patients having to go to parking lots to access free W-Fi host spots to attend their appointments. The residents in the proposed project area need access to broadband to help them get and stay connected to all these essential services. Broadband will also allow the residents in the proposed project area access to employment sites and potential job opportunities. Telework has been proven to work for many companies and could be a standard for future hires. The residents in rural Aitkin County do not have access to these opportunities and the award of this project could be life changing.

6. If the project includes a Communication Enhancement Component, describe the proposed enhancement activities and how it would further support or benefit residents and community members? Note: other proposed Communication Enhancement activities may be denied funding if it is determined the activities do not fit the requirements of CDBG-CV funding.

Not applicable

7. What resources, if any, are currently available for residents and community members to utilize or apply for in regards to broadband service assistance? Applicants should be aware that a review for duplication of benefits will be required prior awarding funds. More information on duplication of benefit can be found in the Minnesota CDBG-CV guide on the SCDP website.

Aitkin County does not currently offer any type of broadband assistance to residents in the proposed project area.

8. **Would this proposed project not be feasible without the award of the requested CDBG-CV broadband grant funds?** *If the proposed project was awarded less than the requested CDBG-CV funding, how would the reduced amount of funding impact the project (example: reduction in the proposed services area)?*

The proposed project encompasses a vast area of land that is densely populated. The proposed project includes approximately 93 miles of fiber and passes approximately 565 homes. The average cost per passing is almost \$9,000. Without funding this project will not happen and most likely this area of the county will remain unserved. If less than the amount requested is awarded, then the project would need to be reduced in size and fewer residents would have access to the FTTH service.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

1. **Complete the following Current/Proposed Average Speed table.**

For each community (using county name for unincorporated area) within the proposed service area, state the current average download and upload speeds and proposed average speeds that will be available to the community after project completion. Speeds should be entered in Mbps (Megabits per second).

*Note: the proposed average speed should not be lower than 25 Mbps download / 3 Mbps upload.

Community name	Current average speed		Proposed average speed	
	Download	Upload	Download	Upload
Idun Township	<10 Mbps	<1 Mbps	1000 Mbps	1000 Mbps
Pliny Township	<10 Mbps	<1 Mbps	1000 Mbps	1000 Mbps
Rice River Township	<10 Mbps	<1 Mbps	1000 Mbps	1000 Mbps
Seavey Township	<10 Mbps	<1 Mbps	1000 Mbps	1000 Mbps
White Pine Township	<10 Mbps	<1 Mbps	1000 Mbps	1000 Mbps
Williams Township	<10 Mbps	<1 Mbps	1000 Mbps	1000 Mbps
City of McGrath	25 Mbps	3 Mbps	1000 Mbps	1000 Mbps

2. **What is the approximate percentage area of the proposed service area that is categorized/zoned as residential?**

24%

3. **Will the project provide connections to non-residential buildings?** *If yes, what funding source will cover these connections?*

If businesses within the proposed project area are passed and request FTTH service, Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative, the broadband provider, will provide the funding for the construction of fiber lines to the requested buildings.

4. Does the proposed service area include one or more of the following community descriptions when compared to the statewide average?

- High unemployment or poverty rates
- Low median household income
- High percentage of students eligible for free or reduced cost school lunches
- Significantly higher population loss levels.

Explain how the service area meets any of the measures above and provide citation or evidence to support this claim.

The United States Census Bureau indicates the overall Minnesota median household income is \$71,306. The median household income for the residents in the proposed service area in the following census tracts; tract 7905.1 which is at \$42,560 and tract 7704 which is at \$46,895. These values are well below the state average medium income levels. Per data from the MN Department of Health, in the census tracts noted above include poverty levels that are at 12.9% and 15% respectively. An average of the census tracts for the proposed service area is 13.95%, which is higher than the statewide average of 10.5%.

(<https://mndatamaps.web.health.state.mn.us/interactive/povertytract.html>)

Based on information received from the Minnesota Department of Health, in Aitkin County, 35% of students qualify for free lunch eligibility, 13.4% qualify for reduced lunch eligibility therefore the total percentage qualifying for free and reduced lunch is 48.4%.

5. Provide the median household income of the community(ies) that will benefit from the service area ([U.S. Census: 2014-2018 Median Household Income](#)).

City/County name	Community name (if applicable)	Median household income
Aitkin County	Idun	\$45,989
Aitkin County	Pliny	\$45,989
Aitkin County	Rice River	\$45,989
Aitkin County	Seavey	\$45,989
Aitkin County	White Pine	\$45,989
Aitkin County	Williams	\$45,989
Aitkin County	McGrath	\$45,989

Median listed above represents all of Aitkin County.

See Attachment: 2.5 - Aitkin County Median Household Income

6. Will the project include the following assistance to LMI households?



EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- a. Will there be assistance offered to LMI households to access/connect to the network? If yes, describe the program or assistance and how participants would qualify.
 - b. Will the Broadband service provider offer service payment assistance to LMI households that subscribe to the service? If yes, describe what level of assistance would be provided, the duration of assistance and how the household would qualify.
 - c. Will community residents be informed of other possible service payment assistance programs during or near the end of the project? If yes, how will this information be distributed in the proposed service area? List a few programs that may be offered, if known. *Examples of assistance programs include the FCC Lifeline Program and the upcoming FCC Broadband Emergency Benefit Program.*
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- a. No assistance will be provided through Aitkin County.
 - b. MLEC Fiber, the broadband service provider will offer LMI households in the project area a reduced cost package for those in need. Residents will need to apply for the program by providing evidence of qualify programs through the school lunch program, SNAP and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for applicants age 65+. However, if the FCC Broadband Emergency Benefit Program is continued, MLEC will be working to get approval to offer this to all MLEC Fiber customers, including those in the proposed project. The EBBP would than replace the reduced cost package offered by MLEC.
 - c. The County and MLEC will work together to implement community education sessions that will include direct mailing and email communications. This will be ongoing throughout the project development.

7. Will this project occur in conjunction with other ongoing or proposed broadband infrastructure project(s) in or near the proposed service area? If yes, identify the other project(s) and how these projects could impact, whether beneficial or adverse, this proposed project.

MLEC is completing a FTTH home project in 2021 that is located just north of the proposed project area. The proposed project area will be a connected and an extension of this new built fiber network.

8. Describe what initiatives the Broadband service provider will undertake to communicate its proposed marketing plan to its prospective broadband services customer base. The marketing plan should include activities to communicate the award of the proposed grant project, the timing and availability of constructed



EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

broadband service, and the applicant's plans on how to optimize broadband subscription rates once service becomes available.

MLEC has marketing professionals experienced in working with the region's residents. MLEC has an additional advantage of being a trusted local provider of both electricity and fiber Internet to the area. MLEC currently has a 56% take-rate for all homes passed by the MLEC Fiber network.

MLEC will promote the award of the proposed grant project through the means of newspaper, newsletters, direct mailings, websites, and social media postings.

MLEC has a broadband promotion process in place that informs residents when a FTTH project will be coming to an area. Successful strategies include door-to-door neighborhood campaigns, as well as putting out yard signs promoting the availability of broadband in the area. MLEC will also promote the new service availability in the Cooperatives monthly newsletter, by direct mail, local newspaper announcements, and through social media.

In addition, MLEC has a fully functional website in place <http://www.mlecmmn.net> to assist customers with plan selection, sign up and to find out if Broadband is available in their area.

9. Based on the proposed project area in which building and/or ground disturbance will occur, will the project potentially impact any local/state/federal historic architectural or archeological resources, farmland, a floodplain, or a wetland? If yes, briefly describe what elements may be impacted.

The proposed project area is located within a potential wetland. Upon award of the project, Mille Lacs Energy will engage in the appropriate actions to obtain the proper permitting required.

The proposed project is located within potential areas that contain cultural resources. Upon notice of award of the project, Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative will engage the appropriate consulting firm to perform Phase 1 a/1 cultural resources survey of the project and develop an avoidance plan to minimize impacts to found cultural resources. The subsequent report will be submitted to the State of Minnesota Historic Preservation Office for review and comment. Typically, MNSHPO provides confirmation of avoidance plans and provisions the agency requires. Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative will incorporate any avoidance plan determined for construction phase practices.

In addition, the proposed project is located within areas that have potential to contain threatened and endangered species and/or critical habitat. Upon notice of award of the project, Mille Lacs Energy will submit an application requesting the State of Minnesota research their NON game and Natural Resource data based to verify the presence of threatened or endangered species or critical habitat. Reports of this nature typically contain recommended avoidance plans if the data base returns positive finding. Mille Lacs Energy will incorporate any avoidance plan determined by the agency for construction phase practices.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Note: Individual projects that will expend over two thousand dollars (\$2,000) in CDBG-CV funding for construction or rehabilitation activities must adhere to the Davis Bacon Prevailing Wage rates and Federal Labor Standards. Davis Bacon Prevailing Wage rates, are subject to change and can be found [here](#).

1. Of the following programs, select all the programs the grantee(s) has applied for, has been awarded funding, or received funding from for broadband related activities within the last two (2) federal fiscal years:

- Local allocation of CARES Act funding directed towards broadband development/deployment
- Minnesota Office of Broadband Development Border-to-Border Broadband Grant
- USDA Reconnect Program
- USDA Telecommunication Infrastructure Loan and Loan Guarantee Program
- USDA Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program
- USDA Community Connect Grant Program
- FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) – Phase I
- IEED National Tribal Broadband Grant (NTBG)
- Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG and/or ICDBG-CARES)

In the space below, if the grantee(s) applied for a program(s), state if the application(s) was selected for funding. If that application selected, state how much funding was requested and awarded. If the funding decision has not been released, state how much funding was requested and include the date the funding award notification should be announced. If the grantee applied or received funding for broadband related activities from a program/fund not listed above, include the name and amount request and awarded for that program/fund.

Not applicable

2. Does the broadband service provider intend to participate in the upcoming FCC Emergency Broadband Benefits program?

- Yes No Undetermined

3. Have engineering services for project design been procured through a competitive process or are engineering services completed by the broadband service provider engineers? *If a competitive process did occur, include the dates the procurement process occurred.*

No – a competitive process did not occur, engineering services have been completed by the broadband provider, MLEC.

4. Will the Broadband service provider offer the broadband services for a minimum five-year period after the project is completed?

- Yes No

5. How will any maintenance, repair, or system operation expenses be financed for a minimum of five years after the project has been completed?

MLEC, the broadband provider will handle all maintenance, repair and system operation expenses that may occur over the life of the fiber network.

6. If a discounted rate will be offered to income qualified households, state the discount rate and what service will be covered by this discount?

MLEC will offer a discounted plan at \$39.95 with speeds of 50 Mbps/50 Mbps to qualifying residents. If the Emergency Broadband Benefit is continued after the initial funding period, MLEC hopes to participate in this program and will discontinue the discounted plan if able to participate.

7. Describe the overall organization strength and relevant broadband technical experience of the parties included in this application to build, manage, and effectively operate the proposed broadband project, if approved. Include a brief description of the management history and capacity of key officers and management staff. This description may be attached as a separate document and organization structure charts may be attached as well.

Aitkin County has an Economic Development Coordinator who will work directly with the Broadband provider and then will work in conjunction with the County Administrator. Additionally, Aitkin County has contracted Lakes and Pines Community Action Council to oversee the execution of the CDBG Grant, with Aitkin County. Lakes and Pines Community Action Council is an experienced CDBG Grant Manager.

See attached documents provide by Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative, the broadband provider for organizational strength.

*See Attachment 3.7 Organizational Strength
See Attachment 3.7a Organizational Charts*

8. Complete the following table with the best estimated month and year for listed milestones to be completed.

CDBG-CV funding award notices are tentatively scheduled to be released in June 2021.

Procurement of broadband service provider (if applicable)	N/A
Construction engineering work completed	10/2021
For projects a tower installation component, does the community have site control of the proposed tower site?	N/A
If the community does not have site control for the tower, when will it be secured	N/A
Completion of Environmental Review	3/2022
All necessary permits obtained	5/2022
Proposed start to project activities	5/2022
Project 25% completed	7/2022
Project 50% completed	9/2022
Project 75% completed	11/2022
All Construction (including restoration work) completed	7/2023
Project 100% completed (all locations have service access)	7/2023

9. Based on the timeline above, would this project be 100% completed in 30 or 32 months of being awarded funds?

- Yes, this project could be completed within 30 months
- Yes, this project could be completed within 30 to 32 months
- No, this project could not be completed within 32 months

- 10. Have all required municipal/county/state approvals necessary for this project to begin construction from all applicable area planning commission/zoning authority/road authority/railroad crossing entity, etc. been identified? What approval and permits will be required?**

Upon award the following permits and approvals will be obtained for the proposed project.

Aitkin County Highway Permit

MN State DNR Permit

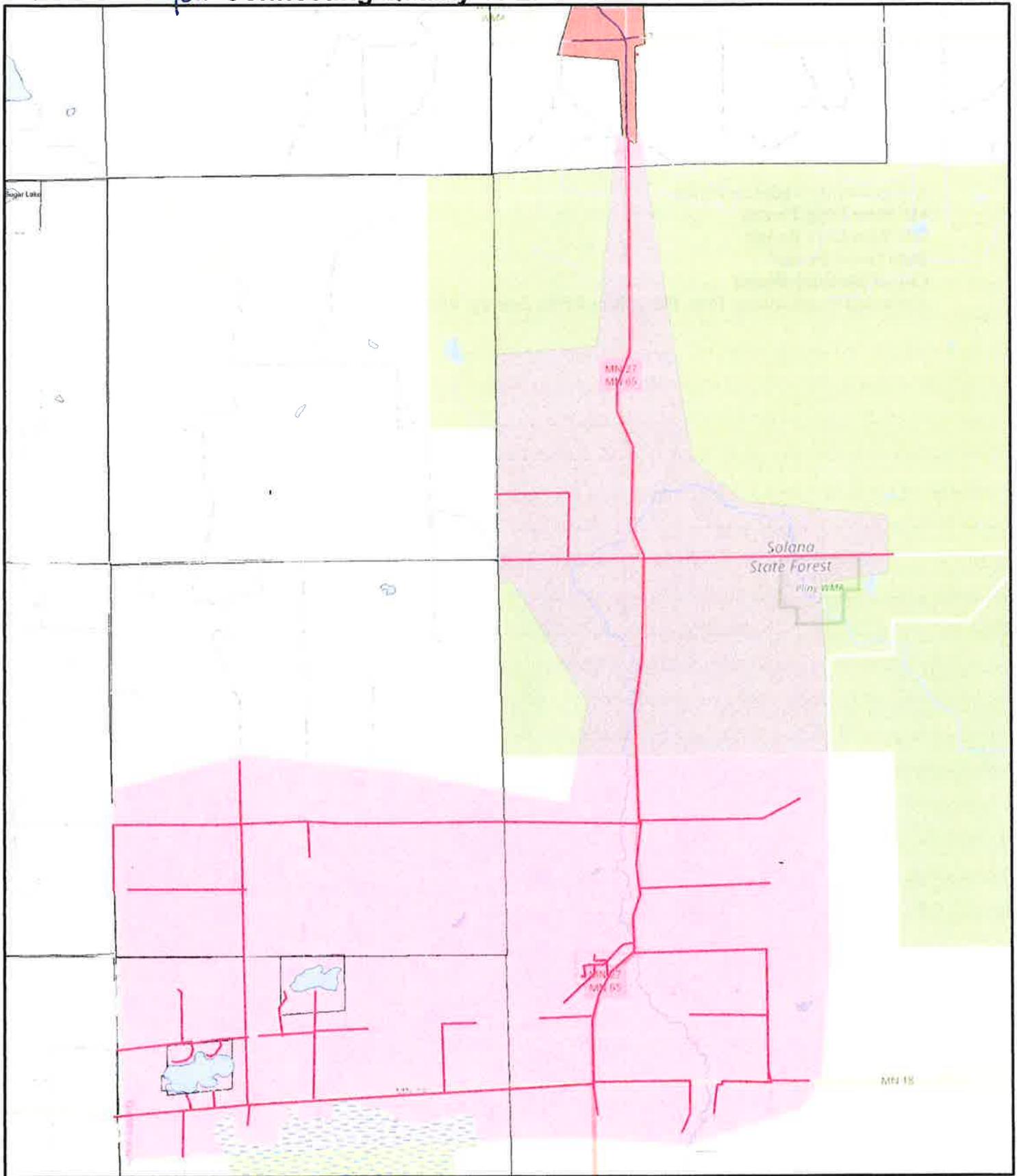
MN State DOT Permit

State Forest Permit

City of McGrath Permit

Township Notifications; Idun, Pliny, Rice River, Seavey, White Pine, Williams

Aitkin County and MLEC Fiber Connecting Quality of Life with Broadband

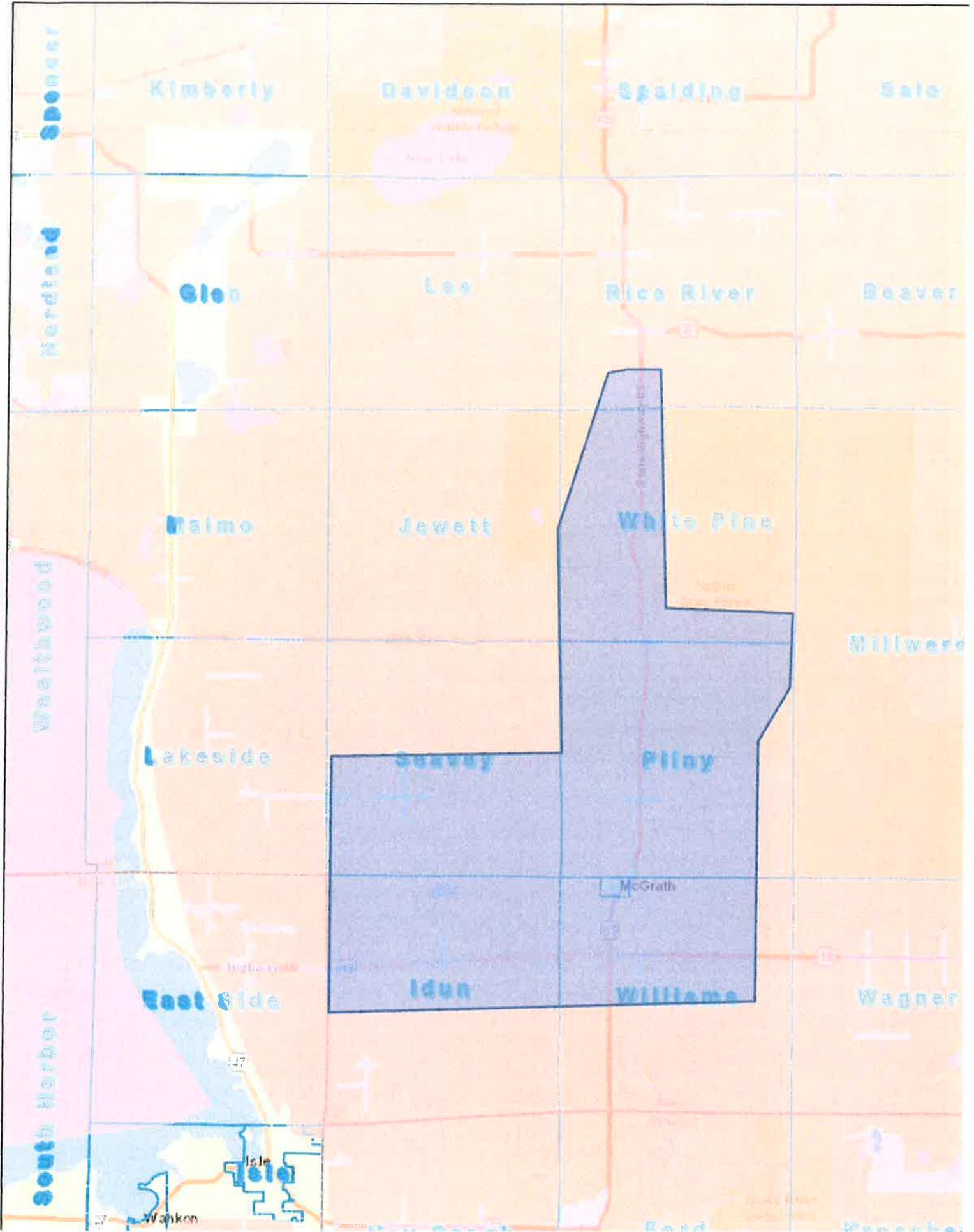


 Proposed Project Area

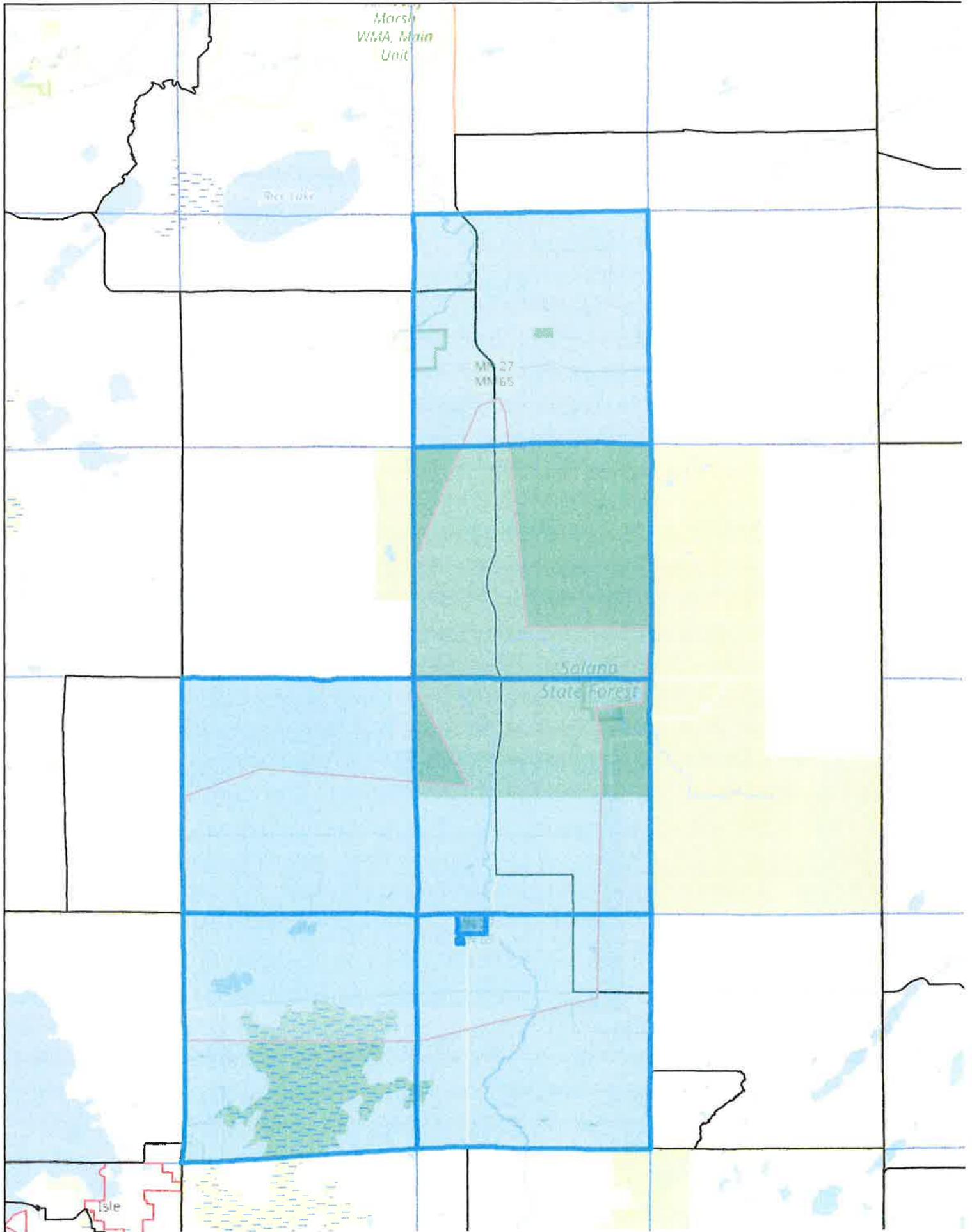
 Proposed Fiber route

 Existing MLEC Fiber Network

Attachment B - Proposed Unreserved/Underused MN Broadband Map (Print)



Attachment C - LMA Percentage Determination Map
Low- and Moderate-Income Data, based on 2011-2015



Attachement C.1 LMA Pertentage Determination

Aitkin County	County	Township/City Name	LOW	LOWMOD	LOWMODUNIV	LOWMOD_PCT	y
	Aitkin	Idun township	70	120	295	40.68	
	Aitkin	McGrath city	20	40	70	57.14	
	Aitkin	Pliny township	15	40	80	50.00	
	Aitkin	Rice River township	50	65	115	56.52	
	Aitkin	Seavey township	20	40	65	61.54	
	Aitkin	White Pine township	4	15	25	60.00	
	Aitkin	Williams township	105	130	170	76.47	
Average of LMI						54.88	

Attachment D Financial Performance

Total Project

Aitkin County

FINANCIAL PLAN - PERFORMA

Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative
2021 MN DEED CDBG-CV

		Total Costs	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
OSP - FTTH Construction							
Fiber Cable Construction		\$ 3,521,960	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Engineering		393,410	-	-	-	-	
Capitalized Labor & Benefits - Installs		819,586	-	-	-	-	
Total OSP -FTTH Construction		<u>\$ 4,734,956</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Customer Access Equipment/Installs							
Premise Access Equipment		\$ 106,400	\$ 53,200	\$ 53,200	\$ -	\$ -	
Capitalized Labor & Benefits - Installs		134,600	\$ 67,300	67,300	-	-	
Total Access/Router Equipment		<u>\$ 241,000</u>	<u>\$ 120,500</u>	<u>\$ 120,500</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Video Equipment							
Video STB's	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Partner's Contribution		-	-	-	-	-	-
Total CPE		<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Total Capital Costs (Note 1)		<u>\$ 4,975,956</u>	<u>\$ 120,500</u>	<u>\$ 120,500</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Depreciation Rates							
OSP - Fiber	20 year	5.00%	-	-	-	-	-
Customer Premise Equipment	5 years	10.00%	6,025	18,075	24,100	24,100	24,100
Total Depreciation			<u>\$ 6,025</u>	<u>\$ 18,075</u>	<u>\$ 24,100</u>	<u>\$ 24,100</u>	<u>\$ 24,100</u>
Customer:			30%	20%	3%	3%	1%
Total New Customers	564	169	113	17	17	6	
Data @ 100 Mbps	96%	162	108	16	16	6	
Data @ 250 Mbps	3%	5	3	1	1	-	
Data @ 500 Mbps	1%	2	1	-	-	-	
Data @ 1 Gbps	0%	-	-	-	-	-	
Data @ 100 Mbps		81	216	278	294	305	
Data @ 250 Mbps		3	7	9	10	10	
Data @ 500 Mbps		1	3	3	3	3	
Data @ 1 Gbps		-	-	-	-	-	
Total Customers		<u>169</u>	<u>282</u>	<u>299</u>	<u>316</u>	<u>322</u>	
Revenue:							
Data @ 50 Mbps	\$ 39.95	\$ 9,708	\$ 25,888	\$ 33,318	\$ 35,236	\$ 36,554	
Data @ 100 Mbps	\$ 51.95	\$ 37,872	\$ 100,991	\$ 129,979	\$ 137,460	\$ 142,603	
Data @ 250 Mbps	\$ 85.00	3,060	7,140	9,180	10,200	10,200	
Data @ 500 Mbps	\$ 100.00	1,200	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	
Data @ 1 Gbps	\$ 150.00	-	-	-	-	-	
Other Rev- Residential Router Lease (65%)	\$ 9.95	1,093	1,824	1,934	2,044	2,083	
Other Rev - Phone (CTC)	\$ 7.50	380	635	673	711	725	
Connection Fee	\$ 50.00	8,450	5,650	850	850	300	
Total Revenue		<u>\$ 61,763</u>	<u>\$ 145,727</u>	<u>\$ 179,534</u>	<u>\$ 190,101</u>	<u>\$ 196,064</u>	

Amortment D (CONT)

Expenses:							
Depreciation		\$ 6,025	\$ 18,075	\$ 24,100	\$ 24,100	\$ 24,100	
Plant Maintenance	13.00%	7,833	23,498	31,330	31,330	31,330	
Customer Service		8,000	14,000	15,000	16,000	16,000	
Labor & Benefits	\$ 38,000.00	88,000	58,000	38,000	38,000	38,000	
Tech Support (Fixed Charges)		24,000	40,000	42,000	44,000	45,000	
Marketing		12,000	5,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	
Total Expenses		\$ 145,858	\$ 158,573	\$ 152,430	\$ 155,430	\$ 156,430	
Net Income		\$ (84,095)	\$ (12,846)	\$ 27,104	\$ 34,671	\$ 39,634	
Cumulative		\$ (84,095)	\$ (96,940)	\$ (69,837)	\$ (35,166)	\$ 4,468	
Cash Flow		\$ (198,570)	\$ (115,271)	\$ 51,204	\$ 58,771	\$ 63,734	
Cash Flow -Cumulative		\$ (198,570)	\$ (313,840)	\$ (262,637)	\$ (203,866)	\$ (140,132)	

Data @ 5C0 Mbps	\$ 100.00	1,200	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600
Data @ 1 Gbps	\$ 150.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Rev- Residential Router Lease (65'	\$ 9.95	1,093	1,824	1,934	2,044	2,083	2,121	2,160	2,199	2,199	2,199	2,199
Other Rev - Phone (CTC)	\$ 7.50	380	635	673	711	725	738	752	765	765	765	765
Connection Fee	\$ 50.00	8,450	5,650	850	850	300	300	300	300	-	-	-
Total Revenue		\$ 61,763	\$ 145,727	\$ 179,534	\$ 190,101	\$ 196,064	\$ 199,640	\$ 203,217	\$ 206,795	\$ 208,256	\$ 208,256	\$ 208,256

Expenses:

Depreciation		\$ 124,399	\$ 254,823	\$ 260,848	\$ 260,848	\$ 260,848	\$ 242,773	\$ 236,748	\$ 236,748	\$ 236,748	\$ 236,748	\$ 236,748
Plant Maintenance	0.75%	18,208	36,868	37,320	37,320	37,320	37,320	37,320	37,320	37,320	37,320	37,320
Customer Service	\$ 16,000.00	8,000	14,000	15,000	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000
Labor & Benefits	\$ 38,000.00	88,000	58,000	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000
Tech Support (Fixed Charges)	\$ 82,000	24,000	40,000	42,000	44,000	45,000	46,000	47,000	48,000	48,000	48,000	48,000
Marketing	Varies	12,000	5,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Total Expenses		\$ 274,607	\$ 408,691	\$ 395,168	\$ 398,168	\$ 399,168	\$ 382,093	\$ 377,068	\$ 378,068	\$ 378,068	\$ 378,068	\$ 378,068

Net Income

		\$ (212,844)	\$ (262,964)	\$ (215,634)	\$ (208,067)	\$ (203,104)	\$ (182,453)	\$ (173,851)	\$ (171,273)	\$ (169,812)	\$ (169,812)	\$ (169,812)
Cumulative		\$ (212,844)	\$ (475,807)	\$ (691,442)	\$ (899,509)	\$ (1,102,613)	\$ (1,072,222)	\$ (983,110)	\$ (938,748)	\$ (900,493)	\$ (867,201)	\$ (867,201)
Cash Flow		\$ (4,943,901)	\$ (128,641)	\$ 45,214	\$ 52,781	\$ 57,744	\$ 60,320	\$ 62,897	\$ 65,475	\$ 66,936	\$ 66,936	\$ 66,936
Cash Flow -Cumulative		\$ (4,943,901)	\$ (5,072,541)	\$ (5,027,328)	\$ (4,974,547)	\$ (4,916,803)	\$ (4,856,483)	\$ (4,793,586)	\$ (4,728,111)	\$ (4,661,175)	\$ (4,594,239)	\$ (4,594,239)

Note 1: Source Of Funding:

MLEC	6.31%	\$ 309,600
Township Grant	93.69%	4,593,956
Total Capital Costs		\$ 4,903,556

Attachment D.2 Project Financial Narrative

See Attachment Financial Analysis

Based on the financial proforma the proposed project is only a viable option if there is grant funding. With 92.23% funding from DEED, the projected net income will become positive in the third year, with a positive cumulative net income in year five. We are projecting a 50% take rate in the first two years, but as our past fiber projects have shown us, the demand for broadband is high, and our take rates should easily surpass 50%.

Financial Need

The availability of 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, and business opportunities, as well as additional sources of news, entertainment, and activities. Being able to have access to broadband should be a service that is available to every resident within the state and country, regardless of whether they live in cities or out in the rural areas.

Based on the preliminary engineering design completed, the total infrastructure costs to build the FTTH project was determined to be \$4,734,956. Aitkin County's grant request is for the eligible infrastructure costs is \$4,593,956, with Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative committing the remaining \$386,858 for installation and purchase of customer premise equipment. MLEC will also have the expense of plant maintenance, customer service, internet labor and benefits, support fees and marketing for an additional \$145,858 the first year of construction.

MLEC has prepared and included as part of the grant application, a 5-year financial plan-proforma reflecting the financial position of building fiber within the grant area. Based on a 92.23% grant to aid in the cost of construction, MLEC is projecting a **positive** annual net income of \$27,104 beginning in year three. If grant funding were not available to assist in the build-out, the proforma would reflect a substantial annual loss and would take over 75 years to show a positive cash flow.

Based on the potential revenues and projected operating expenses to serve the 564 locations, MLEC has determined it would be too costly to build a network capable of delivering dedicated broadband speeds up to 1 Gbps download, without grant funding assistance. Therefore, this full project will not continue without support of the requested grant.

Amendment 2.5 Aitkin County Median Household Income

2014-2018 Median Household Income in the United States by County

Aitkin County, Minnesota
Median household income:
\$45,989 (+/-2,244)

Less than \$10,000	6.9%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	6.4%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	12.5%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	11.7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	16.6%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20.5%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	9.3%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2.2%
\$200,000 or more	1.8%



Median household income

- \$65,000 or higher
- \$55,000 to \$64,999
- \$45,000 to \$54,999
- \$40,000 to \$44,999
- Less than \$40,000
- Data not available

U.S. median is \$60,293.

United States®
Census
Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
[census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

Note: Hover over the counties for more information.
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates.

Attachment 3.7 Organizational Strength of Broadband Provider (MLEC)

In 2016, Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative (MLEC) partnered with a rural telecommunications cooperative, Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC) headquartered in Brainerd, MN, to bring Fiber-to-the Home (FTTH) to residents in rural Aitkin County. The partnership between MLEC and CTC combines years of knowledge on successfully delivering services to our respective members. MLEC's strength is the local presence and commitments to our members in providing not only affordable and reliable electricity but offering Internet access when no other companies would. CTC has a long-standing history of deploying and operating fiber networks. Their extensive knowledge will keep the MLEC fiber network optimized, not only when initially constructed, but as technology changes and grows into the future.

This unique partnership utilizes the strengths of each cooperative. MLEC has a strong, long-term relationship with its members, providing reliable electric service via an overhead and underground utility infrastructure. The partnership allows MLEC to own the fiber network and bill the customers for their Internet service. CTC has strong background in the deployment and operation of fiber networks. MLEC can utilize CTC's extensive knowledge to assist in the design facilitation, construction, and deployment services of the fiber network. Additionally, CTC offers phone service over the fiber and provides all the back-office provisioning services to MLEC.

MLEC Key Officers and Management:

Chief Executive Officer | Sarah Cron holds the position of CEO at Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative. Sarah has committed 20 years to serving the communities of rural Minnesota; enhancing the lives of the people in those communities by providing reliable energy and connected infrastructure services. Sarah not only works in rural Minnesota, but she lives there. She understands, firsthand, the importance of having access to reliable critical services while experiencing the rich rewards of living in and among such remote beauty. Sarah has completed the National Electric Cooperative Association's Management Internship Program, an extensive leadership program geared towards executive level leaders in the electric cooperative industry. She also holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin – Superior.

Accounting & Finance Manager | Lincoln Messner holds the position of Accounting and Finance Manager at Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative. Has extensive experience in the accounting industry both in dealership accounting as well as manufacturing. Responsible for all for all accounting functions, including government loan funding, financial reporting, financial forecasting, and capital credit retirements at the cooperative. Has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Minnesota – Crookston and has completed his CMA certification in management accounting. The Accounting and Finance Manager reports directly to the CEO.

Technology Manager | Stacy Cluff has 23 years of industry experience and has been with the cooperative since 1997. Graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business from Capella University. Responsible for managing the cooperatives Internet businesses, which include satellite and FTTH and is responsible for the Information Technology at the cooperative. Has been a member of the Blandin Broadband Strategy Board since 2016 and was instrumental in the planning and execution of getting fiber optics to the MLEC members. The Technology Manager reports directly to the CEO.

Operations Manager and Safety Coordinator | William Fillion has over 31 years of experience in the electric cooperative industry. Responsibilities include overseeing all aspects of both outside and inside operations including budgeting, purchasing, construction, maintenance, staking, dispatch, fleet, right of way, general plant maintenance and MLEC's Safety Program. The Operations Manager and Safety Coordinator reports directly to the CEO.

Billing and Member Services Manager | Shelly DeFoe has 22 years of electric cooperative industry experience. Has supervised and managed the Billing and Member Service Team for the past twelve years. Responsible for Member Service, Billing and Collections/Disconnections. Graduated from Bemidji State University with a B.S. Degree in Business Management. The Billing and Member Services Manager reports directly to the CEO.

CTC Key Officers and Management:

Chief Executive Officer/General Manager | Kristi K. Westbrook holds the position of Chief Executive Officer/General Manager and has 23 years of industry experience and has been with the Cooperative since 2007. Strong background in Human Resources, Sales and Marketing and Business Operations, Strategic Planning and Product Development. Earned her SPHR (Senior Professional of Human Resources) as well as her Society of Human Resources Management SCP. Passion for organizational management, effective communication and creating unique work environments/experiences while driving business revenues. Integral role in the Cooperative development and partnerships with new opportunities at CTC in the past five years. Has served on numerous local and state committees and board of directors within the industry and Brainerd Lakes community in addition to being a Trustee on a national board.

Finance Manager | Greg Springer has 22 years of industry experience and has been with the Cooperative since 2008. He graduated from Bemidji State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting. Springer performs all types of accounting related functions, including preparing and posting journal entries, payroll processing, bank reconciliations, and account analysis. He also manages the Carrier Access Billing system, video programmer contracts, E-rate program and is responsible for preparing FCC reports, while providing supervision over the customer billing and accounts payable/receivable functions. Springer was part of a team that converted the billing and financials programs to a new vendor and continues to work on projects that increase the efficiency and accuracy of those programs.

Director of Member Operations | Andy Isackson holds the position of Director of Member Operations and has 19 years of industry experience with the last 13 being at CTC. Has managed the Customer Service Team for the past three years. Graduated from the College of St. Scholastica with a B.A. Degree in Business Management. Previously worked at USLink/TDS Metrocom for 5 years as the Regional Marketing Manager. Vital role in rebranding of CTC and creating new residential packages, website development, and numerous ILEC and CLEC business and residential marketing campaigns and sales promotions. Lead the rollout of CTC's new third-party level one help desk, assisted with product rollouts, and has helped to improve operational processes. Chaired the MTA Telco Marketing Group for two years and is currently on the NTCA Marketing Committee, current Board Member on the St. Joseph's Foundation, and past Board Member of the Brainerd Sertoma Group. Andy has presented at the 2013 Calix User Group Conference, 2014 Minnesota Telecom Alliance Annual Convention, 2014 Minnesota Telecom Alliance Customer Service Peer Group Conference and the 2016 NTCA PR and Marketing Conference.

Technology Manager | Ryan R. Rosenwald holds the position of Technology Manager and has been with the Cooperative since 2004 and brings with him 15 years industry experience plus 5 years of IT experience prior to that. Positions with CTC include Network Administrator in which he consulted with area businesses on setting up and maintaining their corporate network infrastructures, promoted to Sales Manager in 2007 and to Technology Manager in 2011. Responsible for planning, engineering, and building the voice, video, and data networks used to provide competitive services to CTC customers, developing new products, and setting the architectural direction for the network as CTC continues to remain one of the premier providers of communications solutions. Graduated with a BS in Secondary Education in Social Studies from Gustavus Adolphus College.

Engineering & Safety Manager | Steve Gilbert holds the position of Engineering & Safety Manager and has 24 years of industry experience and has been with the Cooperative since 2006. Graduated from Northwest Technical College (M-State) with a degree in Electronics Engineering. Extensive knowledge in Engineering, Central Office Design, Outside Plant Construction, Fiber Splicing, Inventory, and Buildings and Facilities. Chairman of the MTA Plant Managers and Superintendents Peer Group in addition to Board Director for the United Way of Crow Wing and Southern Cass Counties. Experience in numerous projects including RUS loans, fiber-to-the-home and business buildouts, ISD 181 fiber connection, CO power plant upgrades and installations, and backup generator power plant upgrades and installations.

Director of Network Operations | Jason Atwater holds the position of Director of Network Operations and has 24 years of industry experience and 21 years with CTC. Graduated from Inver Hills College with a Telecommunications Degree and from Dakota County Technical School with a Telecommunications Diploma. Extensive knowledge and experience in wireless, video programming/video integration, fiber-to-the-home projects, and numerous other special projects. Previous positions with CTC include Combination Technician and Supervisor of Combination Technicians (managing Outside Plant Technicians and Repair Department).

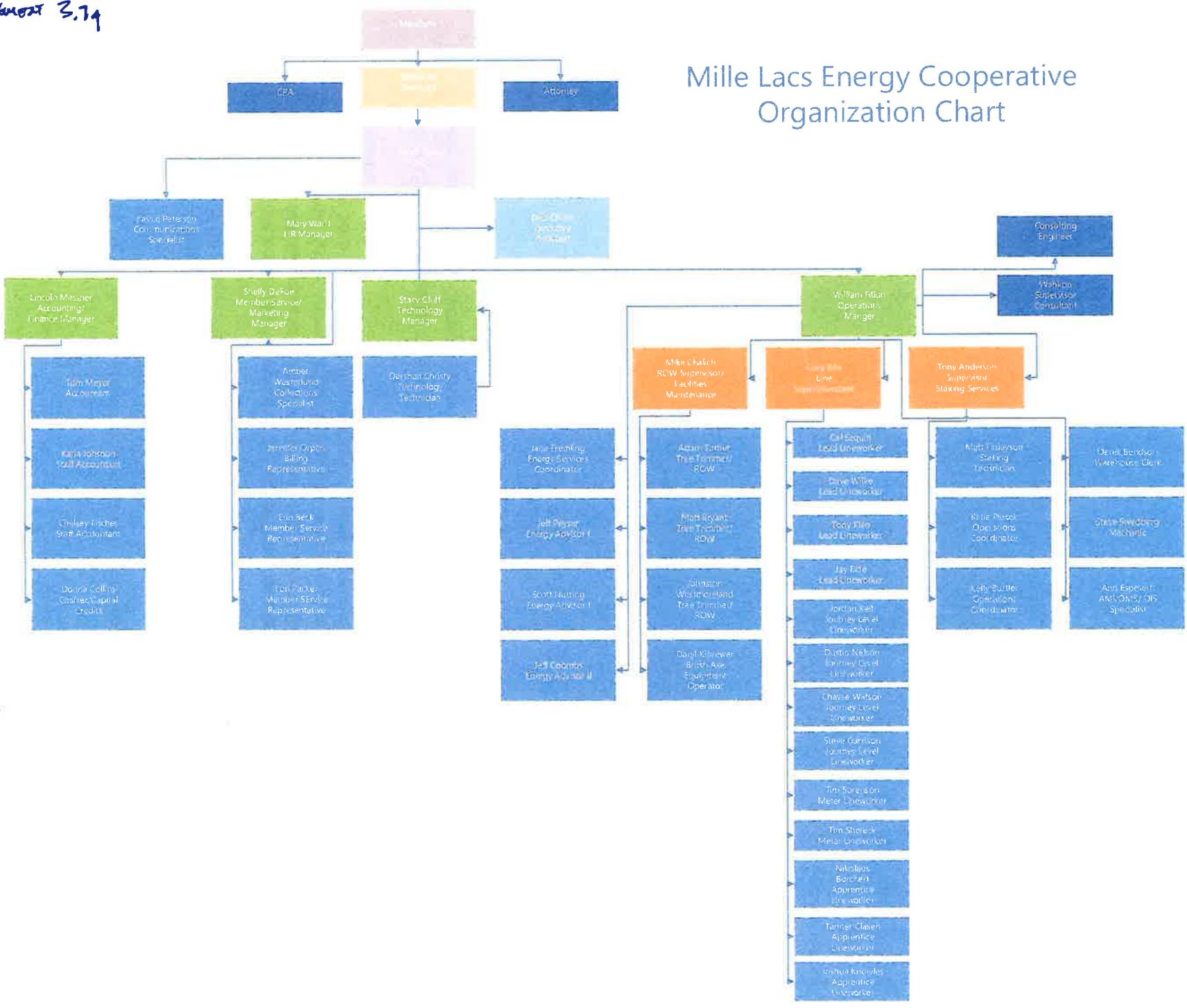
Responsible for product development and rollout. Well networked in the telecommunications industry and active in the Brainerd community.

Director of Business Development | Joe Buttweiler joined the CTC team in 2015 as the Partnership Development Manager. New to the telecom industry with his experience being in the electric industry as General Manager at Arrowhead Electric in Lutsen, MN. Led the development and implementation of the \$21 M fiber optic broadband network in the Arrowhead Region of MN. Graduated from Bemidji State University with a Bachelor of Science in Geography and an MBA from Cardinal Stritch University. Works on long-term business development plans with local, state, and regional partners to secure partnership agreements for CTC's continued growth.

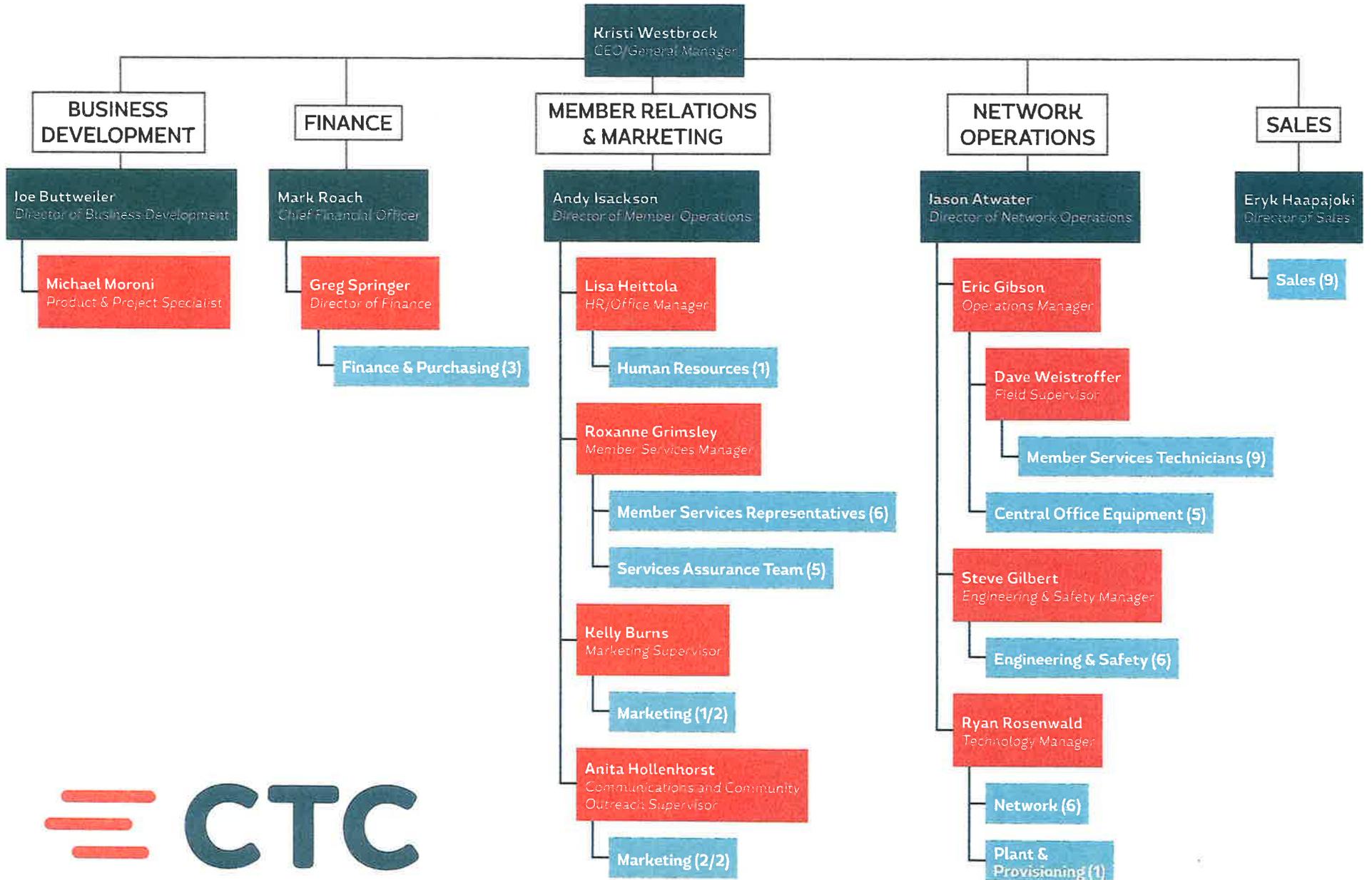
All MLEC & CTC's management staff and Board of Directors have many years of experience and have been with the Cooperative and/or their respective industries for many years.

Attachment 3.7a

Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative Organization Chart



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

goctc.com | 218-454-1234

As of May 2021

MINNESOTA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) Cover Sheet

Applicant: Aitkin County

Author: Jessica Seibert- County
Administrator

CDBG-CV Amount Requested \$4,593,956.

Amount of Other Funds \$ 231,198.

Check the community this application represents:

- Entitlement - Non-entitlement

Place a check mark in each box that represents each activity you will be submitting an application for:

- Public Services
- Retrofitting/Commercial Rehab
- Broadband Development Services

Access to broadband is as imperative today as electricity was 75 years ago. A reliable fiber optic network is the backbone necessary to provide rural resident access to the benefits of unlimited bandwidth, cost efficiency and reliability. Residents in our proposed project area do not have access to quality or affordable Internet service for everyday needs and essential services. Furthermore, in most areas of the proposed project it is not even an option for them to receive a wireline Internet service. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that broadband is no longer a luxury utility, but a requirement to meet daily needs. Distance learning is now the new normal, not just for K-12, but for higher education across the country. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly shown that residents lacking access to broadband have and will continue to fall farther behind in education. The past year, telemedicine has emerged as a critical tool in healthcare to reach more patients and to help keep people safe in their homes. The need for symmetrical speeds has also become evident as the use of Zoom and other virtual platforms are being used not only for distance learning but for telehealth visits. The healthcare industry has relied heavily on these platforms to see patients. There are many stories of patients having to go to parking lots to access free W-Fi host spots to attend their appointments. The residents in the proposed project area need access to broadband to help them get and stay connected to all these essential services. Broadband will also allow the residents in the proposed project area access to employment sites and potential job opportunities. Telework has been proven to work for many companies and could be a standard for future hires. The residents in rural Aitkin County do not have access to these opportunities and the award of this project could be life changing.

By signing below, the Applicant certifies to the best of their knowledge that the data and information provided in the Application is true and correct.

Signature of Authorized Official:

____/____/____
Date:

**Signature of Authorized Official
Partnering Community (if applicable)**

____/____/____
Date:

**Signature of Authorized Official
Partnering Community (if applicable):**

____/____/____
Date:

Signature of Primary Administrator Official:

____/____/____
Date:

**Signature of Secondary Administrative Entity Official
(if applicable)**

____/____/____
Date:

**Signature of Broadband Service Provider Official
(Broadband only)**

____/____/____
Date:

Signature of Engineering firm Official (Broadband only)

____/____/____
Date:

Instructions: Please return your completed form as part of the Response submittal.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form

This form gives applicants and grantees an opportunity to disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may exist when receiving a grant. It is the applicant/grantee's obligation to be familiar with the Office of Grants Management (OGM) [Grants Policy 08-01 Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making effective date 1/1/21](#) and to disclose any conflicts of interest accordingly.

All grant applicants must complete and sign a conflict of interest disclosure form.

X or my grant organization do NOT have an ACTUAL or POTENTIAL conflict of interest.

If at any time after submission of this form, I or my grant organization discover any conflict of interest(s), I or my grant organization will disclose that conflict immediately to the appropriate agency or grant program personnel.

I or my grant organization have an ACTUAL or POTENTIAL conflict of interest. (*Please describe below*):

If at any time after submission of this form, I or my grant organization discover any additional conflict of interest(s), I or my grant organization will disclose that conflict immediately to the appropriate agency or grant program personnel.

Printed name: Jessica Seibert

Signature:

Organization: County Administrator, Aitkin County, MN

Date:



FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS AND CERTIFICATIONS

The applicant hereby assures and certifies that:

- a) It will comply with all applicable federal and state laws, regulations, rules and Executive Orders.
- b) It possesses legal authority to apply for the grant, and to execute the proposed program.
- c) Its governing body has duly adopted or passed as an official act a resolution, motion or similar action authorizing the filing of the application, including all understandings and assurances contained therein, and directing and authorizing the identified as the official representative of the applicant to act about the application and to provide such additional information as may be required.
- d) It is following a detailed, written Citizen Participation Plan which will provide opportunities for citizen participation, hearings, and access to information with respect to its community development program that are comparable to those required of grantees under Section 104(a) of the Housing and Community Development Act and by regulations at 24 CFR 570,486(a).
- e) Its chief elected official or other duly authorized officer of the applicant if assistance is approved and hereby:
 - 1) Consents to assume the status of the “responsible Federal Official” as that term is used in Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 104(f) of Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, and other provisions of Federal law, as specified in 24 CFR 58.5 which further the purposes of NEPA.
 - 2) Is authorized and consents on behalf of the applicant and him/herself to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal courts for the purpose of enforcement of his/her responsibilities as such an official.
 - 3) Consents to review and comment on all Environmental Impact Statements prepared for Federal projects which may have an impact on the applicant’s/recipient’s community development program.
 - 4) Consents to perform all coordination functions required under 24 CFR Part 58 and 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508.
- f) The ***MN CDBG-CV Program*** has been developed to give maximum feasible priority to activities which will benefit low and moderate-income families. The requirement for this certification will not preclude the accepting and approving an application where the applicant certifies, and DEED determines, that all or part of the ***MN CDBG-CV Program*** activities are designed to meet other community development needs having urgency as specifically explained in the application.
- g) Its program will be conducted and administered in conformity with Civil Right Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352) and the Fair Housing Act (Public Law 90-284), and that it will affirmatively further fair housing.
- h) It will comply with all provisions of the Uniform Administrative Forms of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.
- i) It will give DEED, HUD and the Comptroller General through any authorized representative access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers or documents related to the grant.
- j) It will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using positions for a purpose that is or gives the appearance of being motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves or others, particularly those with whom they have family, business, or other ties.

- k) It will follow a Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan that is in accordance with the provisions of Section 104(d) and all other provisions of the Act.
- l) It has or will develop a plan that identifies community development and housing needs, including the needs of low and moderate-income persons, and the activities to be undertaken to meet such needs.
- m) Its notification, inspection, testing and abatement procedures concerning lead-based paint will comply with 24 CFR Part 35.
- n) When issuing statements, press releases, request for proposals, bid solicitation and other documents describing the above-mentioned program such as the environmental review, public hearings, fair housing notices, etc., it shall clearly state:
 - 1) The percentage of the total cost of the project which will be financed with *CDBG-CV* money, and 2) the dollar amount of *CDBG-CV* funds for the project.
- o)
 - 1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
 - 2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form- LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.
 - 3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all sub awards at all tiers (including subcontracts, sub-grants, and contracts under grant, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all sub recipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.
- p) It has adopted and will enforce a policy prohibiting the use of excessive force by law enforcement agencies within its jurisdiction against any individuals engaged in nonviolent civil rights demonstrations and has adopted and is enforcing a policy of enforcing applicable state and local laws against physically barring entrance to or exit from a facility or location which is the subject of such nonviolent civil rights demonstration within its jurisdiction in accordance with Section 519 of Public Law 101-144, (the 1990 HUD Appropriations Act).
- q) The Grantee agrees to provide a drug free workplace by notifying employees that unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the Grantee's workplace and specifying actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibition. The Grantee must have an Awareness Program, or establish a drug free workplace awareness program to inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse, the availability of drug counseling and penalties for violations of the drug free workplace policy. Prior to release of funds, Grantee will provide evidence of a drug-free workplace to the State. If applicable, all secondary communities involved with this project will adhere to this condition.
- r) Floodplain Management - Executive Order 11988 requires Federal activities to avoid impacts to floodplains and to avoid direct and indirect support of floodplain development to the extent practicable.

HUD's regulations in 24 CFR Part 55 outline HUD's procedures for complying with EO 11988. Part 55 applies to all HUD actions that could be harmed or cause harm if located in a floodplain, including but not limited to proposed acquisition, construction, demolition, improvement, disposition, and financing actions under any HUD program. The purpose of Part 55 is not in most cases to prohibit actions in a

floodplain, but to provide the method for HUD projects to comply with EO 11988 and avoid unnecessary impacts.

CERTIFICATION OF ABILITY

The City/County of Aitkin County, MN, hereby certifies its ability to meet Federal Performance and Procurement Requirements with Certification as further expanded in the preceding attachments.

Name of Chief Elected Official

Title

Signature

Date

Citizen Participation Plan - Example

Pursuant to Section 104(a)(3) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, this Citizen Participation Plan is hereby adopted to ensure that the citizens of Aitkin County, (hereinafter referred to as the Applicant), particularly persons of low and moderate income residing in slum and blight areas and in areas in which CDBG-CV funds are proposed to be used, are encouraged to participate in the planning and implementation of CDBG-CV funded activities.

Public Hearing

A public hearing or public hearings will be the primary means of obtaining citizen views and responding to proposals and questions related to community development and housing needs, proposed CDBG-CV activities.

Prior to submitting a CDBG-CV application to the State of Minnesota, the Applicant will need to conduct at least one public hearing to identify community development and housing needs, including the needs of very low and low income persons, as well as other needs in the community that might be addressed through the CDBG-CV program. At the hearing, the Applicant must also, at minimum, review the proposed CDBG-CV activities, their benefiting location(s), overall cost and proposed financing, and the implementation schedule. In addition, the past performance of the Applicant in carrying out CDBG-CV responsibilities should be reviewed. Compliance with historic requirements of the CDBG-CV program must be discussed, including whether there are/may be any historic or potentially historic buildings in the target area, and how the Applicant intends to address compliance with federal regulations governing the "Protection of Historic Properties."

Formal notice of the public hearing must be provided, which follows the posting/publication requirement(s) of the Applicant. A public notice will also be posted in places frequented by the public, especially low- and moderate-income persons benefiting from or affected by proposed CDBG-CV activities. As circumstances warrant and as the Applicant determine necessary or appropriate, participation may additionally be specifically solicited from persons of low and moderate income, those benefiting from or affected by CDBG-CV activities and/or representatives of such persons. Hearings will be held at times and in locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries with accommodation for persons with disabilities to assure accessibility. The Aitkin County will identify limited speaking/non-English speaking residents and make special efforts to assure them equal opportunity in the citizen's participation process and have interpreters present as necessary. Citizens must be provided the opportunity to comment upon the original Citizen Participation Plan and on substantial amendments to it, or to the activities for which CDBG-CV funds will be used.

Public Information and Records

Information and records regarding the proposed and past use of CDBG-CV funds will be available at The Aitkin County Government Center during regular office hours. The public will be so informed of this by public notice. Special communication aids can be made available to persons upon request.

Written Comments and Response

The Applicant will respond to written complaints and grievances, in writing, in a timely manner. When at all possible, such written responses shall be made within fifteen (15) working days.

Applicant

Signature of Chief Elected Official of Applicant

Date

NOTE: EACH JURISDICTION PARTICIPATING IN A JOINT APPLICATION IS REQUIRED TO FOLLOW CITIZEN PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS. A SINGLE PLAN CAN BE USED FOR A MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL APPLICATION, BUT CITIZENS FROM ALL JURISDICTIONS MUST BE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE.

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF MINNESOTA) ss
COUNTY OF Aitkin

Diane Erickson being duly sworn on an oath, states or affirms that he/she is the Publisher's Designated Agent of the newspaper(s) known as:

Aitkin Independent Age

with the known office of issue being located in the county of:

Aitkin

with additional circulation in the counties of:
Aitkin

and has full knowledge of the facts stated below:

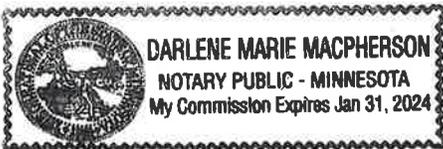
- (A) The newspaper has complied with all of the requirements constituting qualification as a qualified newspaper as provided by Minn. Stat. §331A.02.
- (B) This Public Notice was printed and published in said newspaper(s) once each week, for 1 successive week(s); the first insertion being on 05/19/2021 and the last insertion being on 05/19/2021.

MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE NOTICES
Pursuant to Minnesota Stat. §580.033 relating to the publication of mortgage foreclosure notices: The newspaper complies with the conditions described in §580.033, subd. 1, clause (1) or (2). If the newspaper's known office of issue is located in a county adjoining the county where the mortgaged premises or some part of the mortgaged premises described in the notice are located, a substantial portion of the newspaper's circulation is in the latter county.

By: Diane Erickson
Designated Agent

Subscribed and sworn to or affirmed before me on 05/19/2021 by Diane Erickson.

Darlene Marie MacPherson
Notary Public



Rate Information:

(1) Lowest classified rate paid by commercial users for comparable space:

\$15.00 per column inch

Ad ID 1138705

AITKIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT APPLICATION

The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing in the Government Center Board Room, 307 second street northwest, Aitkin, Minnesota 56431, on Tuesday May 25, 2021 at 10:30 a.m. to discuss an application for Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus funds for development of broadband infrastructure.

Published in the
Aitkin Independent Age
May 19, 2021
1138705



EAST CENTRAL MINNESOTA

Ad Proof

Not Actual Size

**AITKIN COUNTY BOARD
OF COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
FOR COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT BLOCK
GRANT APPLICATION**

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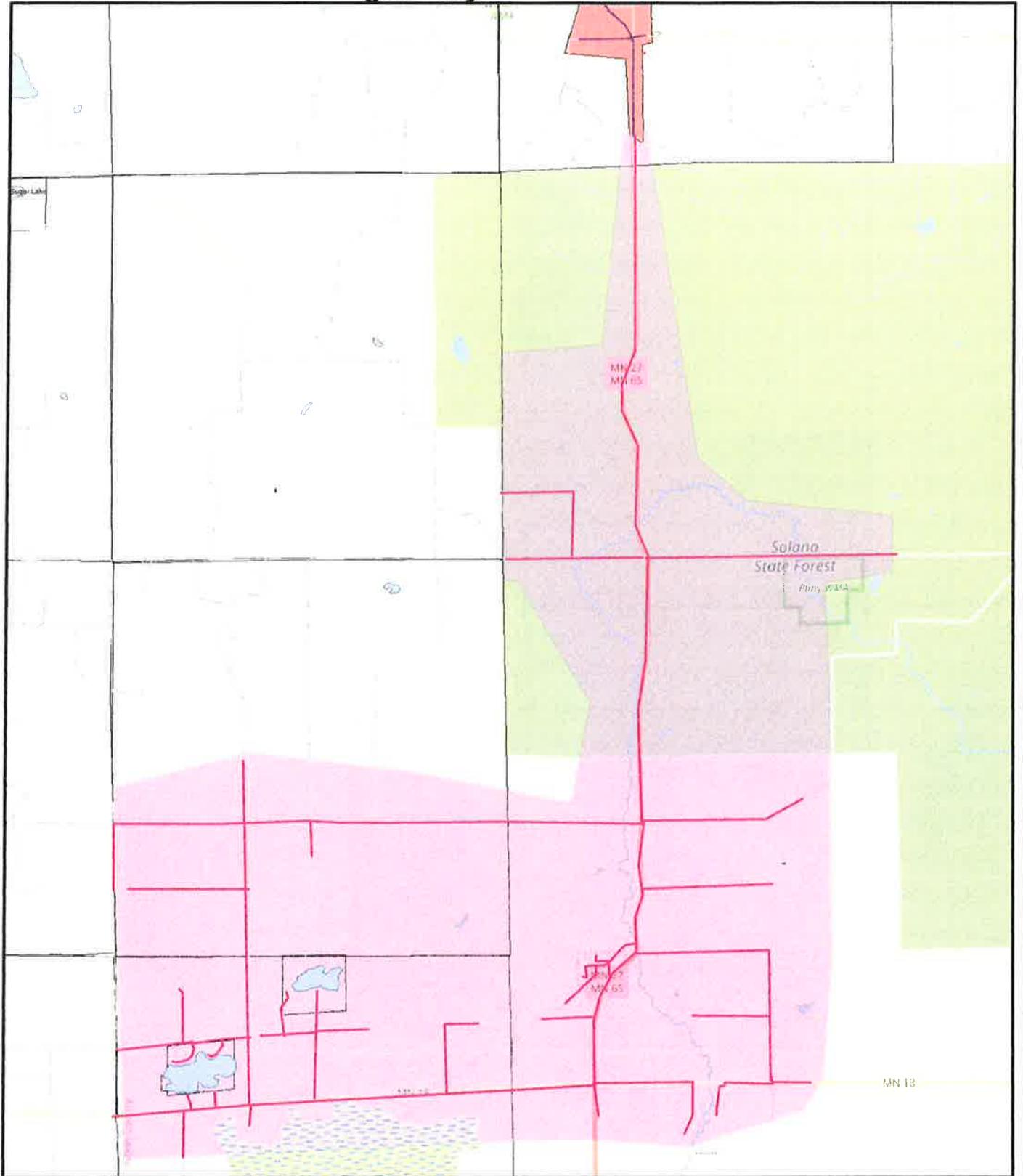
Published in the
Aitkin Independent Age
May 19, 2021
1138705

-Public Notice Ad Proof-

This is the proof of your ad scheduled to run on the dates indicated below. Please proof read carefully. If changes are needed, please contact us prior to deadline at Cambridge (763) 691-6000 or email at publicnotice@apgecm.com

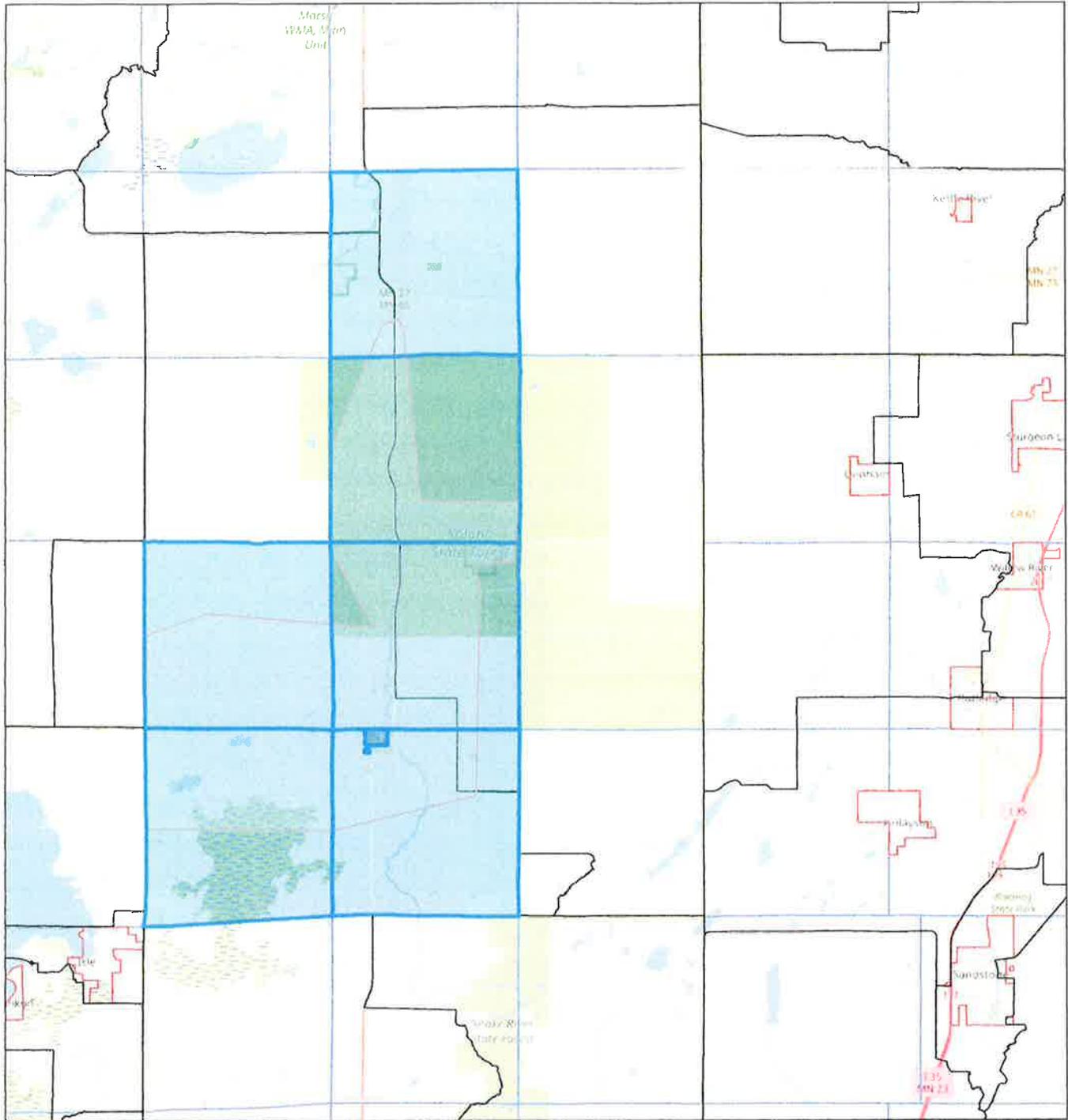
<p>Date: 05/12/21</p> <p>Account #: 482627</p> <p>Customer: AITKIN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION</p> <p>Address: AITKIN COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER 307 2ND STREET NW, ROOM 310 AITKIN</p> <p>Telephone: (218) 927-3761</p> <p>Fax:</p>	<p>Publications: Aitkin Independent Age</p>
<p>Ad ID: 1138705</p> <p>Copy Line: May 25 PH Comm Dev Block Grant</p> <p>PO Number:</p> <p>Start: 05/19/21</p> <p>Stop: 05/19/2021</p> <p>Total Cost: \$27.98</p> <p># of Lines: 21</p> <p>Total Depth: 2.333</p> <p># of Inserts: 1</p> <p>Ad Class: 150</p> <p>Phone # (763) 691-6000</p> <p>Email: publicnotice@apgecm.com</p> <p>Rep No: MA700</p> <p>Contract-Gross</p>	

Aitkin County and MLEC Fiber Connecting Quality of Life with Broadband



-  Proposed Project Area
-  Proposed Fiber route
-  Existing MLEC Fiber Network

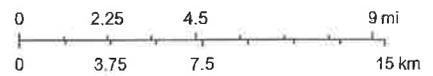
Low- and Moderate-Income Data, based on 2011-2015 ACS 5-year Estimates



5/20/2021, 2:13:58 PM

- LMISD by Block Group
- LMISD by Place & Consolidated City
- LMISD by County Subdivision
- LMISD by County

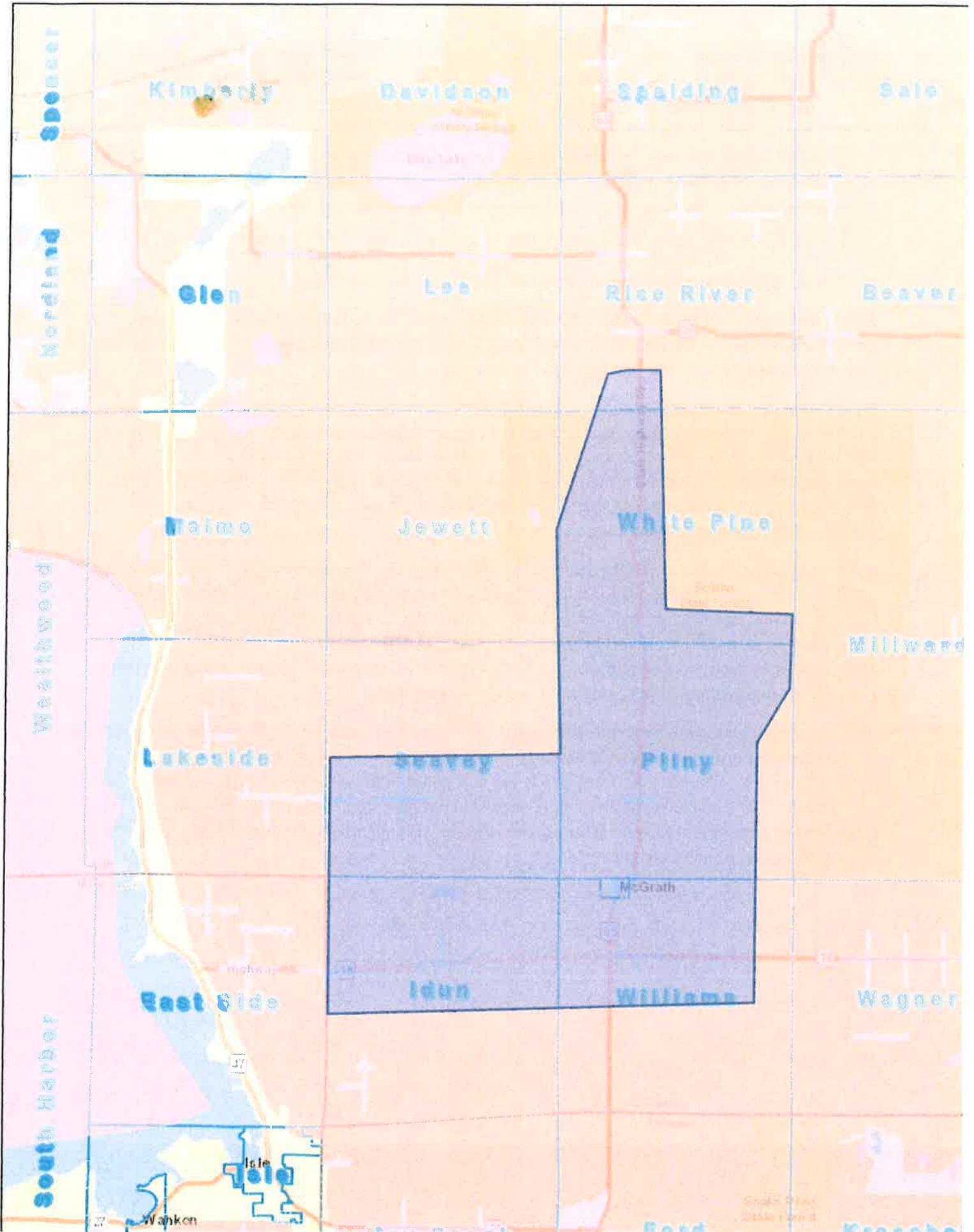
1:288,895



© OpenStreetMap (and) contributors, CC-BY-SA

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Web
Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA

MN Broadband Map (Print)





Cooperative organizations are dedicated to the mission of serving their member-owners. It is at the core of our existence. Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative (MLEC) has long fulfilled this mission as an electric cooperative, bringing electricity to rural Minnesota when for-profit electric companies would not. Now, we are bridging the digital gap between our rural members and reliable Internet service. Much like the early days of electricity, we are bringing true gigabit fiber internet service to that last mile of rural Minnesota. To the very places for-profit internet providers do not want to serve.

We are fortunate to be located in beautiful central Minnesota, but due to topography and densely wooded areas satellite Internet and other wireless solutions still leave our members without the service they not only deserve, but desperately need.

The decision to enter the broadband market was influenced by our members' needs. We knew that broadband was vital to economic development and prosperity in rural areas and that it would enhance the quality of life for our members and the communities we serve. With the help of our partner, Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC), we were able to embark on our fiber optic journey. With over sixty years of experience, our working relationship is strong and is built on trust and the principle of cooperatives collaborating.

Our fiber Internet service, MLEC Fiber, launched in 2016. Since then, our network has grown to over 1,650 members with access to 1 Gbps symmetrical Fiber-to-the-home broadband. We currently have five project areas including south of Aitkin (Phases 1-4) and the East Lake area of McGregor, MN. Residents in these project areas will have expanded educational, economic, and health care opportunities. We saw first-hand how broadband was and still is desperately needed during the COVID-19 pandemic for distance learning, telehealth, and remote working.

MLEC is committed to partnering with Aitkin County to bring 1 Gbps symmetrical fiber-the-home to an area in southeast Aitkin County that is desperate for broadband. This project fits perfectly with our mission to bring broadband to our rural area to not only enhance the quality of life of the residents but provide essential broadband services that are needed to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. We are committed to growing and expanding our service to more MLEC members and Aitkin County Residents. The value it brings is simply unmatched.

Sarah Cron
Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative
CEO

AITKIN COUNTY VETERAN SERVICES

Penny Harms, Veterans Services Officer

307 2nd St NW Rm 114

Aitkin, MN 56431

218-927-7320

penny.harms@co.aitkin.mn.us

Re: High-speed internet in Aitkin County

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been the Aitkin County Veterans Services Officer for 14 years. In that time the VA has been increasing their offerings of on-line options for submitting claims, ordering medications, communicating with your doctor, checking the status of a claim, etc.

In the past 14 months, with new rules due to COVID, the VA has made significant leaps in its use of the internet to include telemedicine, applying for travel reimbursement, updating bank account information and more.

One thing that has changed very little in Aitkin County over the past 14 years is access to the high-speed internet. Many of my veterans do not have internet access in their homes or what they have is not sufficient for on-line appointments with their VA MD. Many of them do their appointments by phone instead and they have to come to my office to submit their applications for travel reimbursement or other VA benefits.

It is of utmost importance that the veterans and all residents of Aitkin County have access to high-speed internet and it needs to be affordable. Many retired veterans in this county were farmers or loggers and live solely on Social Security Retirement.

Living in a rural community in Minnesota should not mean we have to live without affordable access to high speed internet.

Sincerely,



Penny Harms
Aitkin CVSO



To improve health by providing high quality,
compassionate and personalized care.

Toll Free (888) 270-1882
RiverwoodHealthcare.org

May 4, 2021

MN Department of Employment and Economic Development
Office of Broadband Development, First National Bank Building
332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, St. Paul, MN 55101

Greetings,

I'm writing to support the Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) grant application for
Aitkin County for much needed expansion of broadband high-speed internet for the community of Aitkin and
surrounding communities. This area includes homes, farms and small businesses.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and going forward as we use more digital technology in healthcare, the ability to
connect with high-speed internet for virtual appointments, education classes and business meetings has become
vitally important for residents in our rural area. Some of our healthcare workers are now performing their jobs
remotely from home or other locations. Our medical providers frequently need to access patient information
electronically while off-site in more remote rural locations where they live.

From a health perspective, high-speed internet supports virtual appointments for medical care, allowing
individuals to stay safe at home without going in person to our clinics. Our patients also depend on quick access
to view test results in their electronic health records, communicate with their healthcare providers and schedule
clinic appointments online.

In addition, the expansion of broadband internet to our rural communities can make a tremendous difference in
the quality of life for both people and businesses. The end result is less stress and better mental health.

We look forward to the expansion of broadband internet access to better serve our Aitkin County communities.
Thank you for considering my comments in support of Aitkin County's grant application to the Minnesota
Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Sincerely,

Todd Sandberg (handwritten signature)

Todd Sandberg, Chief Executive Office, Riverwood Healthcare Center

Hospital

200 Bunker Hill Drive
Aitkin, MN 56431
(218) 927-2121
(218) 927-5575 Fax

Aitkin Clinic

200 Bunker Hill Drive
Aitkin, MN 56431
(218) 927-2157
(218) 927-4130 Fax

Garrison Clinic & Pharmacy

27278 State Highway 18
PO Box 426
Garrison, MN 56450
(320) 525-3400 Clinic
(320) 525-3401 Pharmacy
(320) 525-3439 Fax

McGregor Clinic

2 East Center Avenue
PO Box 340
McGregor, MN 55760
(218) 768-4011
(218) 768-4814 Fax

An equal opportunity
provider and employer

Daniel J. Stifter

Superintendent - Aitkin Public Schools

We Are ISD #1

May 3, 2021

ISD #1 continues to expand our technologies and opportunities for our students and community. We are a "One to One" district K - 12. This past year we have expanded our "One to One" program to include grades K - 6. We currently have about 1,100 students with devices from the school district. This allows our teachers to use an unlimited number of resources when working to educate our children.

This only solved part of our connectivity issue. Our challenges now tend to come from the lack of access for some of our students when they leave our buildings. We found that families who believed they had adequate internet connectivity found out they did not have what was needed if they had 2 or 3 children trying to access internet service at the same time. Also many remote areas do not have any access or do not have adequate internet connectivity for students and families to successfully complete online school related work. We have provided mobile Hotspots to families who needed that support, even with the Hotspots some families have to travel to areas where they can connect.

With the potential for an expansion of Broadband, the limits and challenges to some of our students will be lifted. More of our students will have the opportunity to expand their classrooms outside the doors of the building, providing them the same opportunities that connected students have. It will help level the playing field for all of our students.



May 3, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on many inequities, including access to affordable broadband. For older adults, lack of access to affordable broadband means not being able to utilize telehealth resources and mental health services and compounded social isolation through an inability to connect with friends, family, and community. So many individuals have not seen people they care about for over a year.

Aitkin County CARE is a community-based organization providing a wide range of programs for older and disabled adults and caregivers. In 2020 Aitkin County is made up of 33.8% of its population over 65. This is the largest in the state of Minnesota. We rank third in the highest population of disabled adults. In the first quarter of 2021 Aitkin County CARE has served 479 adults. COVID has caused many providers of services for older adults to pivot and expand their services utilizing technology to connect clients to virtual educational and support programs. Aitkin County CARE is no exception. Programs have been expanded to provide virtual exercise classes as well as virtual support groups. The existence of these new programs cannot have the needed impact if potential users cannot access reliable broadband at their rural home.

In addition, Aitkin County is a food desert with only two grocery stores. Both have expanded their services to online ordering and delivery of groceries during the pandemic. Unfortunately, the access is also limited due to broadband access.

Aitkin County CARE fully supports older adults with the hopes of expanded broadband in Aitkin County through this grant.

Sincerely,

Lynne Jacobs
Executive Director

Our Mission: To enhance and promote the independence, dignity, value, and well-being of older and disabled adults and those who care for them.



May 15, 2021

MN Department of Employment and Economic Development
Office of Broadband Development, First National Bank Building
332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, St. Paul, MN 55101

Greetings,

I am writing to support the Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) grant application for Aitkin County.

Growth Innovations is an economic engine for Aitkin County. In order to grow the economic base, our County must continue to improve upon the pillar puzzle pieces that define Economic Development. From a quality-of-life perspective, potential candidates who are interested in moving to Aitkin County full time are easily deterred because of the vast underserved and unserved internet quality areas in Aitkin County. This pool of people includes all aspects of available work force, from college age men and women refraining from returning home because of connection issues to expert Doctors and Nurses needing quality connections to communicate virtually with their patients.

The COVID-19 pandemic has quickly highlighted attention on needed improvements for virtual communications that will have lasting effects long into the future. As we continue to adapt and evolve through this pandemic, many lessons and strategies will continue. Companies will continue to allow their workers to work remotely, causing an influx of what was once "weekend" residents to year-round residents. Their ability to communicate through a quality internet platform will be critical in their decision of where to relocate. One of our largest employers in Aitkin County is Riverwood Healthcare Center. Their ability to implement further progress with tele-medicine is completely reliant on a quality internet platform. Our School District have been put through rigorous changes and must communicate remotely. Rural areas are failing to accommodate the needs of all students.

We look forward to the efforts of Aitkin County and thank them for taking a proactive approach to a giant issue. Thank you for considering my comments.

All the best,

Mark Jeffers, Executive Director

Growth Innovations

Growth Innovations/Aitkin County Growth
316 First Avenue, NW
Aitkin, MN 56431



May 6, 2021

Jessica Seibert
Aitkin County
County Administrator
307 2nd St. NW Room 310
Aitkin, MN 56431

Dear Ms. Seibert,

Please accept this letter of support from the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training in your pursuit of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to install additional internet fiber for increased broadband access throughout Aitkin County. We are excited to support this initiative as we see both tremendous need and opportunity for greater broadband access to enhance opportunities to better connect job seekers to local employers and to connect unemployed and underemployed individuals with the opportunities and resources necessary to pursue re-training – particularly among the disadvantaged populations we serve through our workforce development programming.

The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training (NEMOJT) is a local unit of county government and a well-established workforce development entity which serves Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Lake, Koochiching, and St. Louis counties – serving on average more than 1,500 individuals and families in Northeast Minnesota annually. We work with diverse populations to provide career planning and guidance to assist people in becoming empowered and economically self-sufficient. These populations include participants who are eligible for enrollment based on being disadvantaged, thus need as much support as possible to ensure long term career and personal success – and even more so during these unprecedented times. Our clientele are the individuals in our communities most in need of support during this national COVID-19 public health emergency and moving into this new way of working and living.

All CareerForce locations offer a resource room full of computers for job searching, typically accessible by the general public; however, due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, this access was unavailable and without adequate broadband access throughout Aitkin County, the citizens were significantly impacted and limited as to the services they were able to access. Job seekers who do not have broadband access at home are significantly disadvantaged – not only are their technological skills inadequate due to lack of experience, they don't have the confidence to navigate the host of online job search and training resources, and are unable to connect virtually with our Career Counselors who have the skills and knowledge to assist people in learning and utilizing the ever-changing world of technology.

There is a significant economic impact of access or lack thereof from broadband around workforce re-training – those who are unemployed or underemployed who do not have access to broadband, are limited in the employment and training options available to them. Increased broadband in the region would allow for improved delivery of services for re-training and workforce development during this public health emergency, along with generating innovative ways of reaching the most vulnerable populations now and in the future. We are committed to collaborating with local partners to identify opportunities to generate greater access to broadband for the people we serve.

Sincerely,

Marie Domiano, M.S.Ed.
Executive Director
Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training
820 North 9th Street
Virginia, MN 55792
218-735-6102
marie.domiano@nemojt.org

By Commissioner:

20210525-xxx

Community Development Block Grant-Coronavirus Application

Applicant Name: Aitkin County

BE IT RESOLVED that Aitkin County (Applicant) act as the legal sponsor for the project contained in the Application to be submitted on or before June 1, 2021 (date) and that Chair Mark Wedel (Title of First Authorized Official) and Administrator Jessica Seibert (Title of Second Authorized Official) are hereby authorized to apply to the Department of Employment and Economic Development for funding of this project on behalf of Aitkin County (Applicant).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Aitkin County (Applicant) has the legal authority to apply for financial assistance, and the institutional, managerial and financial capability to ensure adequate construction, operation, maintenance and replacement of the proposed project for its design life.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Aitkin County (Applicant) has not violated any Federal, State or local laws pertaining to fraud, bribery, graft, kickbacks, collusion, conflict of interest or other unlawful or corrupt practice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon approval of its application by the State, Aitkin County (Applicant) may enter into an agreement with the State of Minnesota for the approved project, and that Aitkin County (Applicant) certifies that it will comply with all applicable laws and regulations as stated in all contract agreements.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Chair Mark Wedel (Title of First Authorized Official) and Administrator Jessica Seibert (Title of Second Authorized Official), or their successors in office, are hereby authorized to execute such agreements, and amendments thereto, as are necessary to implement the project on behalf of the Applicant.

I CERTIFY THAT the above resolution was adopted by the Board of Commissioners (governing body of Applicant) of Aitkin County (Applicant) on May 25, 2021 (date).

SIGNED:

WITNESSED:

(First Authorized Official)

(Signature)

(Title) (Date)

(Title) (Date)

(Second Authorized Official)

(Title) (Date)

Commissioner Niemi moved for adoption of the resolution and it was declared adopted upon the following vote

FIVE MEMBERS PRESENT All Members Voting

STATE OF MINNESOTA}
COUNTY OF AITKIN}

I, Jessica Seibert, County Administrator, Aitkin County, Minnesota do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing with the original resolution filed in the Administration Office of Aitkin County in Aitkin, Minnesota as stated in the minutes of the proceedings of said Board on the 25th day of May, 2021 and that the same is a true and correct copy of the whole thereof.

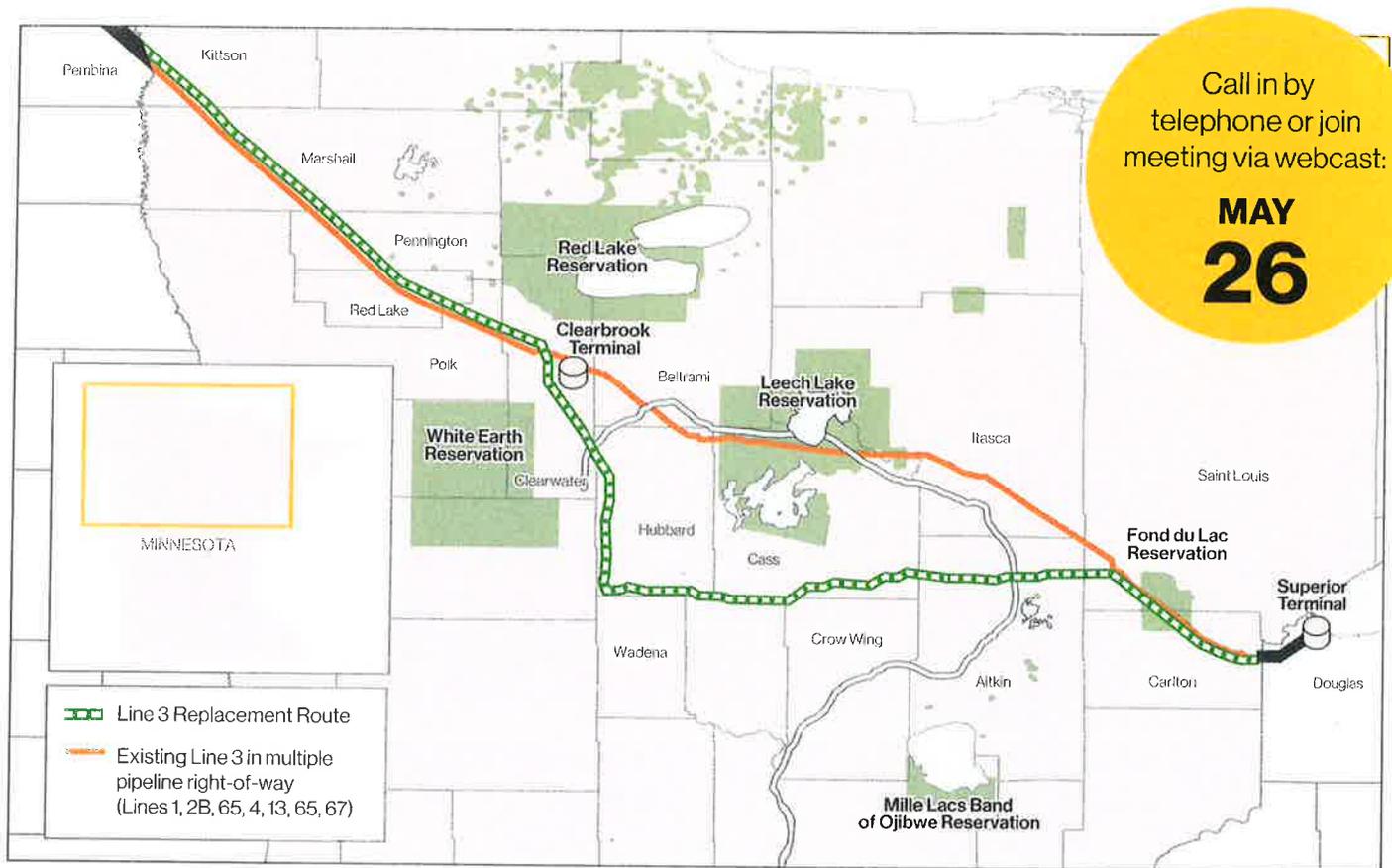
Witness my hand and seal this 25th day of May, 2021

Jessica Seibert
County Administrator

Line 3 Replacement Project in Minnesota

Virtual Open House with Enbridge

The Line 3 Replacement Project in Minnesota is now more than 50 percent complete. Construction was paused for spring thaw and crews are just beginning to get in place to start up work again on June 1. We invite you to join our virtual open house for an update on construction of the pipeline project.



Enbridge is hosting a virtual open house that will have telephone or webcast options. Once you register at enbridgeopenhouse.com/MayOH, you will receive a link providing you with meeting details.

Meeting date: **Wednesday, May 26 at 5 p.m.**

You can also visit our virtual open house any time at: enbridgeopenhouse.com/line3.

Dear neighbor

Message from Barry Simonson and Randy Rice

We are excited to be heading back into mainline construction in early June after a planned spring hiatus. When construction was paused in accordance with seasonal restrictions, fifty percent of the Line 3 Replacement pipe had been lowered into the ground. Crew members are returning to the area and ready to get to work on the remaining project.

Seasonal restrictions did not apply to construction at the project's eight pump stations. Work on four new stations adjacent to existing stations and building four new stations along the new route has been moving full steam ahead and is currently on or ahead of schedule.

The Minnesota portion of the Line 3 Replacement Project is about 337 miles of the total 1,097-mile route. Seven hundred and thirty-three miles of Replacement Line 3 are complete and in service in Canada, as is the 14 mile segment in Wisconsin.



Thirteen miles in North Dakota were replaced in 2020 and will go into service upon completion in Minnesota. Estimated in-service date for Minnesota and Wisconsin is Q4 2021.

For more information about the project, contact your designated representative as found on the back cover of this newsletter or visit enbridge.com/line3US. You are also invited to attend one of the monthly virtual open house events; watch local listings for details about these events.

Be sure to visit the Line 3 Replacement Project virtual meeting room anytime at EnbridgeOpenHouse.com/line3.

Thank you for your continued interest in the Line 3 Replacement Project.

Best wishes,
Barry Simonson, L3R Project Director
Randy Rice, L3R Facilities Director

Everyone home safe

Warmer weather, the return of construction workers after the planned spring hiatus, and the school year drawing to a close will mean more people out and about around town. Our top priority is to keep communities, our employees and contractors safe. There are things we can all do to improve safety.

- Be aware of changes in pedestrian and vehicle traffic patterns.
- Use extra caution when driving near construction activities and watch for heavy equipment.
- Warn children of the dangers of playing on or near construction areas.

For your safety and the safety of others, do not enter Line 3 Replacement Project work areas. Thank you for your help as we work together to bring everyone home safe.

Indigenous opportunities and engagement on the project benefit many

The Line 3 Replacement Project team is committed to engaging with Minnesota's tribal communities. Collaboration with tribal communities offers mutually beneficial economic, social and cultural opportunities. Enbridge has made significant investments in tribal-affiliated work including training, contracting, procurement, and hiring. About six percent (562 workers) of the Line 3 Replacement Project workforce are tribal members and Enbridge has spent \$250 million so far with tribal businesses and on wages for tribal workers.

Enbridge sponsors Empowerment Training in cooperation with Five Skies, a native-owned company. As of March 2021, 143 people have completed the training with an additional 35 people currently enrolled. The Empowerment Training is designed to help graduates move toward careers in the trades. Learn more at fiveskies.org or Facebook: @5SkiesTraining.

Labor unions associated with the project are also offering training to local tribal members. Twelve members are currently enrolled in the Welder Helper program offered by Pipeliners Local Union 798 and 25 have graduated. In addition, the Teamsters, Laborers and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 49 have graduated 28, 23, and 24 tribal members from associated training programs, respectively. Several graduates of these programs are currently working on the Line 3 Replacement Project.

A pipeline inspector apprentice program for tribal members in Northern Minnesota includes 17 people. "Everybody has treated me with the utmost respect," says Mel, a Fond du Lac tribal band member working as an apprentice inspector.



“This is a clear path to a good future. Don't be afraid to come out here and try this because there are people that will help you the whole way here and it could just change your whole life, your whole outlook.”

Find us at — [Facebook](#)/[Twitter](#) & [blog.enbridge.com](#)

Find out more, please visit enbridge.com/line3

Information for communities along our pipeline right-of-way in Northern Minnesota

Line 3 Replacement Project

70 YEARS Proud Community Partner

How to reach us:

General project questions:

- Toll-free: 855-788-7812
- line3replacementproject@enbridge.com

Landowners:

- Toll-free: 866-331-3493
- line3project@enbridge.com

Vendors and suppliers:

- enbridge.com/doingbusiness
- enbridge.com/supplierform

Media inquiries:

- Toll-free: 888-992-0997
- media@enbridge.com

For more information visit:

- Virtual open house: EnbridgeOpenHouse.com/line3
- enbridge.com/line3US

You can also sign up for an e-newsletter for additional updates. Go to: enbridge.com/line3news.

811
Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Visions
This newsletter printed by Visions, Inc. a Native-owned business.

> This photo shows Enbridge's pipeline right-of-way east of Backus, MN as the new replacement pipe was lowered into the trench in mid-February.

Aitkin County Board of Commissioners Board Meeting Attendance Record

Date: May 25, 2021

Name	Please check the boxes that apply.		
	Aitkin County Citizen	Aitkin County Employee	Company Representative – please list.
JEREMY PAQUETTE	YES	NA	HO DEVELOPEMENT
Stacy Cluff	Yes	NO	M L E C
Manu Jeffers	Yes	NO	GROWTH INNOVATIONS
John Welle	Yes	Yes	Highway Department
David McMillan	Yes	Yes	CLCC
Rich Courtemanche	yes	yes	Land
Dennis Thompson	yes	yes	ACLD
Steve Hughes			SWCO
Andrew Carlstrom		✓	