# What do we know about rural users?

- People in rural areas want the same things people in urban areas want with respect to the Internet and technology.

- Costs are higher, incomes are lower.

- Access to expertise is a problem.

- Role models and leadership often have to be cultivated & supported.

- Small town and rural environments need evidence & models in order to improve perceptions of BB.

- Public sources of Internet connections are important in low income & rural communities.

- However, not all public access sites are suitable for *all* uses of broadband (notably, higher education)

- Rural small businesses can benefit from broadband but lack the knowledge base that would maximize their opportunities.

Sharon Strover, University of Texas
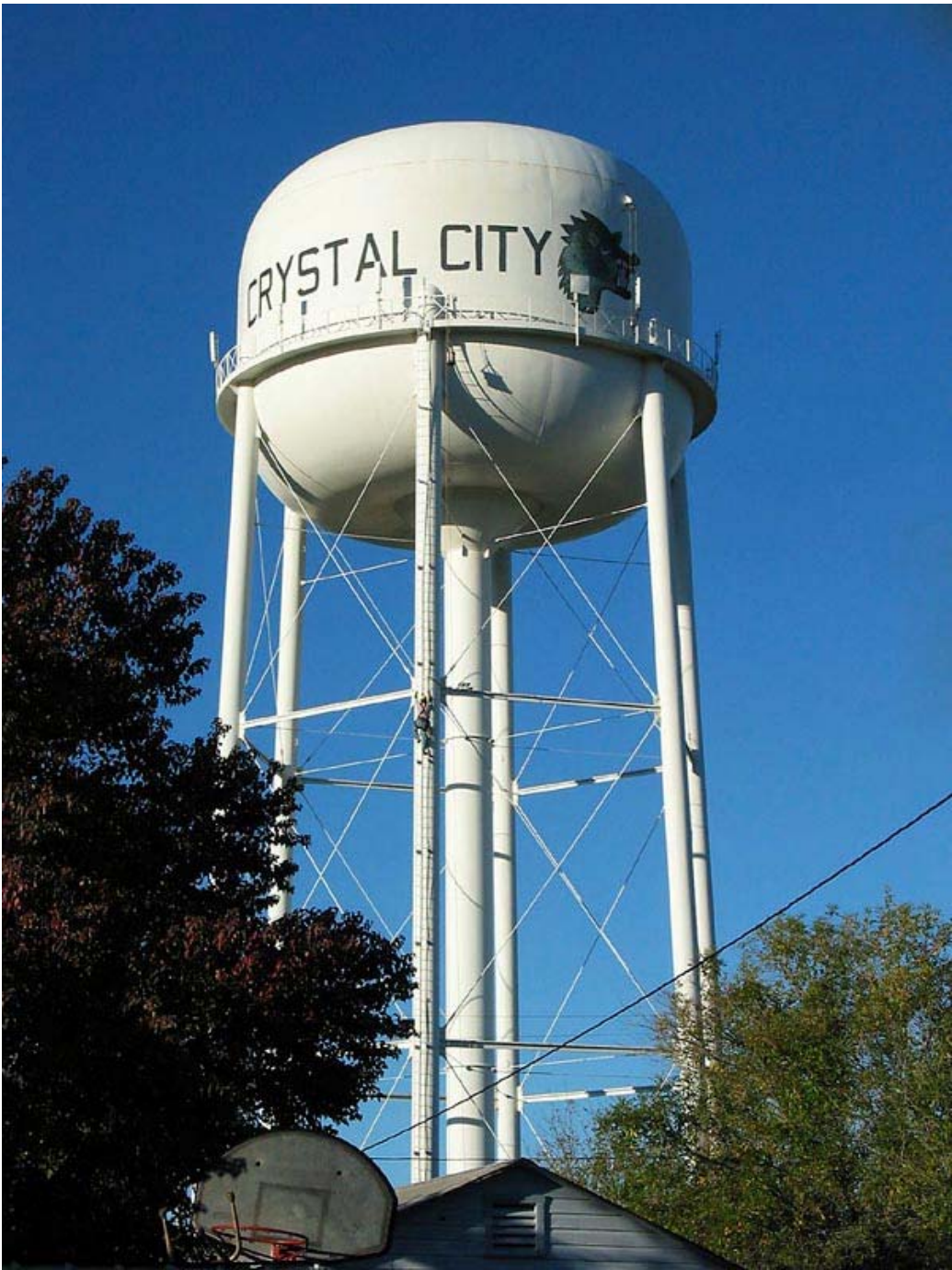
Some policy points…

Redefining rural

Affordability, competition, and the market

Philosophy: Technology is a driver, not a corrective

Access – support for broadband infrastructure deployment is only a start; include mobile access in plans; include accountability in grants/support

Targeted Service support – e-government, small business innovation, education, health

Training – IT skills through schools, community centers, community colleges; support systems

Sharon Strover, University of Texas