



JIM DOYLE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF WISCONSIN

May 3, 2010

Mr. Lawrence Strickling
Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
United States Department of Commerce
Washington D.C. 20230

Re: Wisconsin ARRA Broadband Applications to NTIA for Round 2

Dear Mr. Strickling:

Thank you for again seeking Wisconsin's input on applications submitted to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for grants to enhance the availability and usefulness of broadband technologies. On behalf of the state of Wisconsin, please accept my sincere appreciation for the Round 1 grants that the NTIA did award to Wisconsin applicants. These projects will be serving Wisconsin citizens in the near future. I write now to offer my comments on and support for specific Round 2 applications for ARRA funding currently pending before you. ARRA funding, through the NTIA's Broadband grant program (and through the RUS' Broadband Improvement Program) can help narrow the digital divide, enhance the capabilities of broadband, and bring the benefits of broadband connectivity to the entire country and, of course, to Wisconsin.

In my comments to you last October, I noted that there are users in Wisconsin without broadband and that the majority of those without it want that access. We further know that many who may have broadband access would like more options and more robust choices for that broadband. The NTIA (and RUS) initiatives offer a real hope for some areas of the state that lack broadband, for those users that need improved broadband, and for organizations that need support to extend or expand the use of broadband capabilities to benefit their constituencies. I noted last fall that NTIA grants and RUS grants or loans would "clearly and purposefully better the broadband landscape in Wisconsin." That remains true today. Thus there are needs that NTIA Round 2 grants could help to meet.

As in Round 1, many worthy Round 2 applications have been made for this state. There are several Round 2 NTIA applications for Comprehensive Community Infrastructure, for Public Computing Centers and for Sustainable Broadband Adoption that appear to be national (or widely multi-state) in scope. For the most part, it is unclear what, if any, resources would be allocated to Wisconsin based on the limited information we have from those applicants. These comments do not discount the value

of some of those programs. As in Round 1, I fully anticipate that the NTIA will give due consideration to such multi-state proposals. My comments here address more specifically the Round 2 applications that have an exclusive, or more predominant, Wisconsin footprint.

Comprehensive Community Infrastructure (CCI)

In Round 2, the NTIA is focusing on middle mile projects and broadband networks for anchor institutions. Projects related to these issues are called Comprehensive Community Infrastructure.

Effective broadband requires connectivity and adequate bandwidth from end to end – from the customer to the point of entry to the Internet. To that extent, those projects that address the so-called middle mile and that propose improved backbone or backhaul networks are critical in making broadband work better.

In addition, as I stated last fall, the needs of anchor institutions are also important to the state – to education, to library services, to health-care facilities. Improving broadband capability for public institutions at all levels of government is a high priority. Wisconsin has significantly invested in connecting its schools, libraries and other governmental entities using broadband technology. The needs of health-care institutions and efforts to improve telemedicine are continually being examined. The proposed Round 2 CCI projects will enhance the broadband capabilities for various anchor entities and offer potential benefits in getting infrastructure dispersed on an even wider basis. These CCI grant applications expand and make more robust the middle-mile networks of the state and support Wisconsin’s anchor institutions:

Mad City Broadband	ID # 4671
MUFN	A shared access community access middle mile network. Provides expansion of network coverage in greater Madison, interconnection with regional backbone services and fiber to multiple anchor institutions. Network will include 163 miles of fiber, at speeds up to 10 gig.
Northeast Tower	ID # 4380
Open Door	Provides high-capacity middle mile facilities, plus secondary and redundant fiber in Door, Marinette, and Brown counties.
University of Wisconsin System	ID # 5710
Building Community Capacity through Broadband	Fiber optic and WI Max infrastructure for four demonstration communities/areas: Platteville, Superior, Wausau metro/Central Wisconsin and Eau Claire metro/North West Wisconsin. The project is modeled on an existing and proven Eau Claire – Chippewa Falls community network system. It provides high speed networking, plus backbone transport for anchor institutions. It includes over 400 miles of fiber.

City of Oak Creek	ID # 5352
Fiber Optics for Oak Creek	Fiber connections for public safety. Covers connection of the Oak Creek power plant and city facilities.
Calumet County	ID # 7478
East-WI Lake-to-Lake Broadband Initiative	Connect five underserved eastern WI rural counties including institutions and farms and residences. Would provide a fiber/microwave backbone and wireless access towers for rural communities, farms, Point Beach nuclear facilities, boaters on Lake Michigan and Lake Winnebago.
XO Communications	ID # 5601
Northern Lights	2227 miles of fiber for community access. Building fiber route from Wisconsin to Washington. Wireless access nodes along the route allow for interconnection and wireless data.
Broadband Outreach	ID # 6705
Public Housing Authority Infrastructure project	Last mile infrastructure – high speed wireless for public housing including computers & internet access. Provides computers, Internet connectivity (via WiFi) and training to public housing authorities facilities. Project would include roughly 3,800 housing units in Milwaukee, which would be about 1/4th of the units covered nationwide. (Coupled with SBA # 6458.)
Merit Network	ID # 4658
REACH	Primarily located in Michigan this project has spurs into MN and WI. It connects anchor institutions, public safety, homes and businesses.
County Executives Telecommunications Initiative	ID # 7685
Free Wireless Broadband Service Connecting Counties & Citizens	Free wireless internet for counties. Provides fiber to community and anchor groups plus wireless service at roughly DSL speeds to public.

These CCI proposals listed above warrant your serious consideration.

Public Computing Centers (PCC)

Public Computing Centers are useful for making broadband access – and education – available to citizens in many parts of the state – urban and rural alike – in community-based locations. In Round 2, there are Wisconsin applications that will meet the intended purposes of the NTIA for this program and assist Wisconsin citizens. Proposed PCC projects for Wisconsin include:

College of Menominee Nations	ID # 5313
Comprehensive Community Technology Center	This project creates a 9,800 sq. ft. public computing center with 100 Mbps backbone to serve the Indian tribe and surrounding community. It is associated with a community college. It offers public internet use, education and support, and job training
City of Milwaukee	ID # 6822
Connecting Milwaukee Communities	Multiple public computing centers will provide several hundred machines, plus a community specific web portal to be created and maintained by the City of Milwaukee. The project will enhance broadband and access to computers; enhance technology at community / educational sites, and offer programs to expand jobs and computer training.
Goodman Community Center	ID # 6997
Madison Area Public Computing Center Initiative	Project will target youth engagement and training and resources as a solution to poverty. Run computer training sessions targeted at youth and unemployment. Partnering with City of Madison, Dane County, UW and Xicom, the project will update backbone bandwidth and computers at 10 public computing centers.
Northern Ozaukee School District	ID # 6586
Fredonia Technology Works	An interconnected Community Learning/Technology Center offering classes, employment support, a coffee house environment for community members, software sales, and an interactive Helpdesk staffed by class graduates. It will stand as a self-sustaining nonprofit project and bring computer/broadband literacy and employability to rural Northern Ozaukee County and neighboring areas.
Neovision USA	ID # 5704
WebMobile	Publically accessible computer and communications facilities in mobile vehicles. Provides a web equivalent to a book-mobile - units would drive to location and then establish connection to Internet via satellite. Provides free public WiFi for users near vehicle.

Consistent with the principles of the ARRA, these PCC projects support work force training and development, career assessment and job search, local business and economic development. All are worthy of serious consideration

Sustainable Broadband Adoption (SBA) Projects

Getting broadband to users and making that broadband part of a robust network are important goals. But having programs that educate users about the benefits of broadband and the ways it can be most useful are also important. Broadband sustainability programs focus on those issues. There are several Wisconsin-centric SBA applications before the NTIA in Round 2. These include:

UW System	ID # 5709
Building Community Capacity through sustainable broadband adoption	Work with five diverse community networks (Chippewa Valley, Wausau, Superior, Platteville and Menominee Nation) to develop capacity and resources for educating residents of rural and underserved areas about broadband benefits. Combination of training, training for trainers and development of strategies and tools for building broadband usage.
Broadband Outreach	ID # 6458
Public Housing Authority sustainable broadband adoption	High speed, wireless internet systems for designated public housing communities. Free computers, training and use. Partnering with a nationwide ISP and One Economy for training. Project would include roughly 3,800 housing units in Milwaukee, which would be about 1/4th of the units covered nationwide. (Coupled with CCI # 6705)
Steeplechase Network	ID # 6516
Broadband Community Commons	Enables useful and relevant broadband applications, services and social infrastructure. Steeplechase would partner with community with broadband networks. Steeplechase offers some training, business plan assistance, but appears to primarily be an interface together with revenue sharing (which probably means some advertising and/or sponsored links.)
VIA One Network	ID # 4672
Prepaid Broadband	Provides a simple to use internet access device and first year of service to 48,000 underserved households. Provides a thin-client terminal bundled with connection through a proprietary interface. Devices will be available to Indian tribes in CA, MN and WI.
National Federation of Community Broadcasters	ID # 4453
Native Public Media Native / Rural Community Broadband Adoption and Digital Literacy Project	Introducing equipment, trainers, digital literacy, access and or digital community to areas of low adoption. Uses hotspots at community radio stations. Would establish local WiFi hotspots and computer training centers at 17 local community radio stations nationwide.
Asian Media Access	ID # 7073
Midwest Coalition of Asian Americans	Broadband education, outreach and awareness for Asians.
Ikoring	ID # 7046
Broadband 4U Express	Internet education programs for non-English speaking communities. Uses vehicles to take broadband to communities.

Conclusions

In summary, I am encouraged by these Round 2 ideas that have been set forth in projects proposed for the improvement of broadband in Wisconsin. I recommend these projects and urge you to approve funding for applicants that have proposed to improve Wisconsin's broadband environment. Favorable action by the NTIA and RUS to provide ARRA broadband funding to Wisconsin will meet the real economic development, social and educational needs of this state.

I strongly encourage your approval of Wisconsin Round 2 applications to meet the purposes of the ARRA and serve the best interests of Wisconsin's citizens, institutions and business.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Doyle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Doyle" clearly distinguishable.

Jim Doyle
Governor

CC: Jonathan Adelstein, RUS