

Attachment C, Other Program Priorities



C. Other Program Priorities

Does this project seek to leverage grant funds through private investment?

Yes. FTC intends to leverage grant funds through its own private investment. As evidenced in the schedule below, every \$1.00 of grant funds leverages \$1.86 in investment by FTC.

Initial Construction Costs

Cable & Wire Facilities	128,890
Engineering	<u>25,778</u>
Subtotal	154,668

Cutover and Installation Costs

Installation/Connection Costs	37,056
Customer Premise Equipment	<u>50,176</u>
Subtotal	87,232

Grant/Private Investment

Total Investment	241,900
Less Grant Funds Requested	<u>84,665</u>
Private Investment	157,235

Will this project be an extension of existing infrastructure?

Yes. The PFSA will be fed from FTC's existing Pleasant View network location. This location is an existing telecom hut which already has both battery backup and standby generator power backup to be used in extended power failure situations. This location has fiber-optic 10 Gbps transport feeds through a fully redundant ring offering diverse paths back to the Network Operations Center (NOC) in Rainsville, AL. FTC has seven links to the public Internet:

1. Two 10Gbps links from Ider, AL to the Internet peering facilities at 56 Marietta in Atlanta, GA, carried by iRis networks.
2. Two 10Gbps links from Rainsville, AL to the Internet peering facilities at Elk Grove in Chicago IL, carried by iRis networks.
3. A 10Gbps link from Albertville, AL to the Internet peering facilities at 56 Marietta in Atlanta, GA, carried by AT&T.
4. Two 10 Gbps links from Albertville, AL to the Internet peering facilities at the DE-CIX exchange in Dallas, TX carried by AT&T.

The build will also take advantage of existing Calix Active Ethernet access cards that are currently serving other FTTH customers adjacent to the PFSA. Although additional network equipment will be added as demand requires, using the existing telecommunications huts, 10 Gbps transport feeds, and access cards will allow FTC to serve the Dutton PFSA

subscribers with the best network possible while leveraging existing infrastructure to lower costs.

Does this project serve locations with demonstrated community support?

Yes. FTC has received support from individuals within the community in hopes that the proposed project comes to fruition. Letters have been received from local and state legislative delegates, elected officials, community leaders, and residents of the PFSA.



ALABAMA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

11 S. UNION STREET, MONTGOMERY ALABAMA 36130

REP. JAMES HANES
DISTRICT 23
100 EAST PEACHTREE STREET
SCOTTSBORO, ALABAMA 35768

STATE HOUSE: 334-242-7667
DISTRICT: 256-218-3090
EMAIL: jhanes5555@gmail.com

January 6, 2021

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
Attn: Mr. Kenneth Boswell, Director
P.O. Box 5690
Montgomery, Alabama 36103

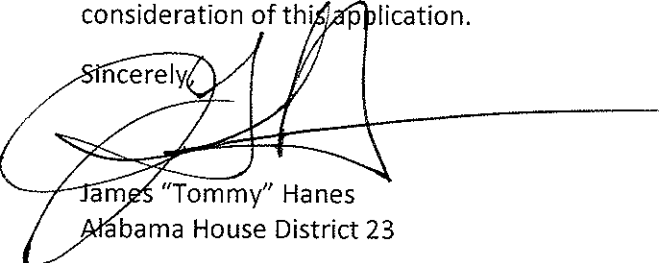
Director Boswell,

I understand that Mr. Fred Johnson and his staff at Farmer's Telecommunications Cooperative Inc, (FTC-Rainsville, AL) are applying for the 2021 Alabama Accessibility Fund Grant in hopes to expand their fiber network to provide high-speed broadband internet access to rural areas located in my district in Dutton, Alabama.

As we have learned throughout the last year, broadband internet is essential to not only students, but to many individuals telecommuting for work and doing business. This year has proven difficult to those in rural areas like much of my district and the need for reliable access to internet has grown to levels we have not experienced before. The pandemic has changed life for most of us and has made broadband, which was once a non-necessity very quickly something that we all need to complete many daily tasks. Now, more than ever, our rural areas and my constituents need direct access broadband internet.

This grant will provide an opportunity for many to access broadband and I humbly ask for your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,


James "Tommy" Hanes
Alabama House District 23



ALABAMA STATE SENATE
ALABAMA STATE HOUSE
SOUTH UNION STREET, 7TH FLOOR
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-4600
334.261.0858

STEVE LIVINGSTON
STATE SENATOR - DISTRICT 8
DISTRICT OFFICE:
POST OFFICE BOX 623
SCOTTSBORO, ALABAMA 35768

COMMITTEES:
CHAIRMAN, FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
RULES
FINANCE AND TAXATION GENERAL FUND
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY
BANKING AND INSURANCE
TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY

January 6, 2021

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
Attn: Mr. Kenneth Boswell, Director
P.O. Box 5690
Montgomery, Alabama 36103

Director Boswell,

It is my understanding that Farmer's Telecommunications Cooperative Inc, (FTC-Rainsville, AL) is applying for the 2021 Alabama Accessibility Fund Grant in hopes to expand their fiber network to provide high-speed broadband internet access to rural areas located in my district (SD8) in Dutton and on Lookout Mountain.

As you well know access to broadband is essential to todays' society. This year has been further testimony to the dire need of broadband in our rural areas as it has been the lifeline for many telecommuting for work and school and furthermore conducting business during the COVID 19 pandemic. Now, more than ever, our rural areas and residents need direct access to what is quickly becoming a basic necessity.

I believe strongly that this grant will enhance the quality of life for many in my district and I respectfully ask that you give this request every consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "SL", written over a horizontal line.

Steve Livingston
Alabama State Senator
District 8



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ALABAMA STATE HOUSE

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130

DISTRICT NO. 24
DEKALB COUNTY

HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER
NATHANIEL LEDBETTER
P.O. BOX 725
RAINSVILLE, ALABAMA 35986
PHONE: (256)638-6397

COMMITTEES:
INTERNAL AFFAIRS - VICE CHAIR
RULES
WAYS & MEANS EDUCATION
COMMERCE AND SMALL BUSINESS

January 5, 2021

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
ATTN: Director Kenneth Boswell
P.O. Box 5690
Montgomery, AL 36130

Dear sir:

Reliable access to broadband services plays a critical role in our modern society, especially for those citizens living in rural areas of our state. Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. (FTC-Rainsville) continues to prove just how dedicated they are to ensuring that the people of my district have easy access to high-quality broadband services.

FTC is currently applying for the 2021 Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund Grant through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). This year, FTC is specifically looking to reach the areas of Dutton and Lookout Mountain, both of which are in need of broadband access in order to improve the lives of those living in these locations. My hope is that you will once again take into account the outstanding job that FTC has always done for our local area and that you will afford them the opportunity to continue in their expansion.

I offer my full support to FTC in their endeavor to improve telecommunications services in Dutton and Lookout Mountain, and I respectfully ask that you please consider their request in the hopes of bettering the lives of the people of Alabama.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathaniel Ledbetter", written over a horizontal line.

Majority Leader Nathaniel Ledbetter
Alabama House of Representatives
District 24



Northeast Alabama Community College

Office of the President
Dr. David Campbell

January 14, 2021

Kenneth W. Boswell
Director, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
P.O. Box 5690
Montgomery, AL 36103-5690

Dear Mr. Boswell,

Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. (FTC-Rainsville, AL) is applying for the 2021 Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund Grant in hopes to expand their fiber network to provide high-speed broadband internet access to rural Jackson and DeKalb County areas. The areas that will receive the service are Dutton and Lookout Mountain (area near Wade's Gap and an area north of Little Rive/Highway 35).

The areas identified are currently underserved and cannot get broadband (Download 25 MBS/Upload 3 MBS).

Broadband is essential in today's information economy infrastructure. This service will help rural areas compete with information for commercial and economic development. This area is also an integral part of the Google Data Center community.

It would be helpful for our residents to have an option for telecommuting and for our students taking existing courses online. These rural areas are in the Northeast Alabama Community College service area, yet the students do not have a viable broadband option for taking online classes.

We believe these grants will greatly enhance the quality of life for the members of these rural areas and sincerely appreciate any assistance you can give us.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Campbell
President, Northeast Alabama Community College



**JACKSON COUNTY
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

P.O. Box 566 • Scottsboro, Alabama 35768 • (256) 574-9344 • Fax: (256) 574-3832
Paul Smith- Director

January 15th, 2021

Kenneth W. Boswell
Director, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
P.O. Box 5690
Montgomery, Al. 36103-5690

Director Boswell,

I am writing in support of Farmer's Telephone Cooperative Inc. and their application for the 2021 Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund Grant to be used to provide high speed access to rural areas of Jackson County, specifically the underserved area in the Dutton Community. This area, among others, cannot currently get access to internet speeds of at least twenty-five megabits download speed nor three megabits per second upload speed.

As one of our teachable moments from the current Covid Pandemic, we understand that high speed internet access is vital for communication, business, and education. At no other time in our history has this been proven to be so important.

Our office believes that this grant will benefit the lives, welfare, and well-being of residents of Jackson County.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Smith", written over a horizontal line.

Paul Smith
Director
Jackson County EMA
256-574-9344
ema3@jcch.net



January 4, 2021

Kenneth W. Boswell
Director, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
P.O. Box 5690
Montgomery, AL 36103-5690

Dear Mr. Boswell,

Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. (FTC-Rainsville, AL) is applying for the 2021 Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund Grant in hopes to expand their fiber network to provide high-speed broadband internet access to rural Jackson County, Town of Dutton. The area identified are currently underserved and cannot get internet speeds of at least twenty-five megabits per second download and three megabit per second upload

The Jackson County Economic Development Authority is the organization responsible for leading the industrial recruitment for our county, as well as fostering an environment where our existing industry can prosper and grow. Broadband is essential in today's information economy infrastructure and has become one of the infrastructure requirements just as power and water. This service will help rural areas compete with information for commercial and economic development. This area is also an integral part of the Google Data Center community.

Not only will it help the businesses themselves, but it will open them up to a new and better trained workforce. It would be helpful for our residents to have an option for telecommuting and for our students taking existing courses online. This rural area is located in proximity to Northeast Alabama Community College, yet the students do not have a viable broadband option for taking online classes.

We believe this grant will greatly enhance the quality of life for the members of these rural areas and sincerely appreciate any assistance you can give us.

Sincerely,

Shelia Shepard
President/CEO



Northeast Alabama Community College

Post Office Box 159

Rainsville, Alabama 35986-0159

256-638-7044 / 256-228-6004, ext. 2294

Fax: 256-638-3052 www.nacc.edu

Chad Gorham

Dean of Instruction- Interim

Director of Extended Day/

Distance Education Programs

gorhamchad@nacc.edu

Kenneth W. Boswell

Director, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

P.O. Box 5690

Montgomery, Alabama 36103-5690

January 19, 2021

Mr. Boswell,

Please accept this correspondence as my most sincere statement of support for Farmers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. in their effort to secure a 2021 Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund Grant, which would help to provide broadband internet to two of the most rural and depressed areas of Jackson and DeKalb Counties. Currently, the internet service in and around the Dutton Community in Jackson County and the Wade's Gap/Lookout Mountain area of DeKalb County is weak and very unreliable. These specific communities are unable to reach internet speeds of at least twenty-five (25) megabits per second download and three (3) megabit per second upload. Overall, quality broadband internet would have a tremendous impact on these areas.

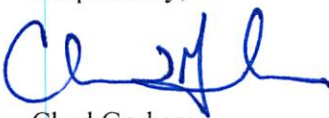
Through my employment as the Director of Distance Education at Northeast Alabama Community College (NACC) and my service to Jackson County Schools as president of the Board of Education, I fully understand the importance of reliable internet service. There are a number of students enrolled in distance education/online courses at NACC that reside within underserved broadband areas. These students often find the internet service available within their home and community leaves them at a disadvantage compared to students who live in areas where quality high-speed internet service is readily available. In order to participate in their online courses, students living in underserved areas are often forced to travel to locations that offer free public internet access, or back to the NACC campus. A fairly large number of these students are actually high school students participating in dual enrollment courses through the college. Many online courses require students to participate in live-feed presentations and other cooperative learning projects. The need for quality internet became even more evident with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in virtually all instruction, both at the K-12 and college level, being converted to an online/distance education format. Subpar internet connection and internet speed made this transition very difficult for many students, while others found themselves unable to complete courses at all due to the lack of reliable internet connection.

Students residing within the aforementioned communities in each county make up enrollments at a number of K-12 schools including the following: Pisgah High School, Section High School, Valley Head High School, Scottsboro High School, Fort Payne High School, Gaylesville High School, Dutton School, and Moon Lake School. Therefore, students from at least eight different schools, as well as those from Northeast Alabama Community College, would directly experience the impact of this grant. The majority of students in each of these K-12 schools qualifies for free or reduced-priced lunches based on total household income. Just as broadband internet would positively impact students enrolled in college residing within these areas, it would also greatly benefit the children enrolled in these local public schools. With reliable internet connection, students would be able to research topics of interest, complete school assignments, explore potential career fields, participate in virtual field trips and class meetings, get assistance with homework and school projects, and collaborate with peers within their school and from around the world.

Jackson County has experienced a decline in overall population over the past ten years. The downturn in population is due, in part, to the decline in available employment opportunities throughout the county. Many businesses and industries have either closed completely or moved operations outside of Jackson County, greatly impacting the overall spirit of our area. The same can be said for DeKalb County. The impact of losing so many textile jobs nearly ten years ago is still being felt to this day. Technology is critical in halting the downturn currently being experienced within both counties. Farmers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. has done a wonderful job of helping ensure that the communities we call home have the same opportunities to accessible high-quality internet service as our neighbors in more affluent cities and counties. The 2021 Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund Grant that Farmers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. is seeking could prove crucial in improving the quality of life and leveling the playing field for students, citizens, and businesses of Jackson and DeKalb Counties.

I want to reiterate my sincere and unwavering support for the positive impact that Farmers Telephone, Inc. has brought to Jackson and DeKalb Counties and for their current efforts to bring critical broadband service to the underserved areas. Please carefully consider this request and help Farmers Telephone, Inc. and the other valued stakeholders move rural communities in Jackson and DeKalb Counties forward.

Respectfully,



Chad Gorham

Tami Myers, *Mayor*
Patricia Romans, *Town Clerk*



Phone: (256) 228-6392
e-mail: duttonto@farmerstel.com

Town of Dutton

P.O. Box 6
Dutton, Alabama 35744

January 7, 2021

Mr. Kenneth W. Boswell, Director
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
P. O. Box 5690
Montgomery, AL 36103-5690

Dear Mr. Boswell

Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative. (FTC-Rainsville, AL) is applying for 2021 Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund Grant in hopes to expand their fiber network to provide high-speed broadband internet access to rural areas of the Town of Dutton in Jackson County.

The areas identified are currently underserved and cannot get internet speeds of a least twenty-five (25) megabits per second downloads and three (3) megabit per second upload.

Broadband is essential in today's information economy infrastructure. This service will help rural areas compete with information for commercial and economic development. This area is also an integral part of the Google Data Center community.

It would be helpful for our residents to have an option for telecommuting and for area students to have a viable broadband option.

We believe these grants will greatly enhance the quality of life for the members of these rural areas and sincerely appreciate any assistance you can give.

Sincerely,

Tami Myers
Mayor, Town of Dutton

From: [Beverly Wise](#)
To: Marketing@farmerstel.com
Subject: FIBER IN DUTTON
Date: Thursday, January 14, 2021 11:40:25 AM

Hi! I have recently been made aware of a potential grant for FTC to stretch the fiber internet services to Dutton!! This would be AMAZING!!!! I currently do not have any internet at my home due to the slowness of my pre existing carrier. We never got speeds over 1-3m's with Century Link. This is entirely to slow and not worth \$89 a month. We could not use FB and NETFLIX at the same time, much less do school work inline. We had checked with FTC and unfortunately it was unavailable to my home. We like to stream movies, our son plays games online, and our daughter is now doing some virtual school work, which proves to be difficult(especially when phone hotspots run out of data) With that said, we want fiber in our home!!! Feel free to contact me with surveys, questions, or any other way I can help contribute to this happening. Thanks so much!!

Beverly Wise

741 County Road 408
Dutton, AL 35744

256-717-7356
bevusmp@gmail.com



Virus-free. www.avast.com

From: [Kristi Clemens](#)
To: marketing@farmerstel.com
Subject: Letter to ADECA
Date: Thursday, January 14, 2021 11:49:16 AM

Help!!!

In our area of Dutton the only available Internet service provider is century link and the service is horrible. We get maybe a speed of 2.5m at home. We just adopted 5 siblings and three of them are in school. For the next 25 years we will need High speed Internet at home to help them get through virtual learning.
Please award farmers telecommunications in rainsville alabama with the Alabama broadband accessibility grant!

Kristi & Ray Clemens

Sent from my iPhone

Will this project serve the highest number of unserved homes, businesses, and community anchor points for the least cost?

Yes. To bring gigabit services to this area, the PFSA will require approximately 4.24 route miles of buried and aerial fiber-optic cable in a mountainous region that has layers of rock to contend with throughout much of the service area. The estimated costs to place the outside plant components of this 4.24 route miles of fiber is \$154,668. By utilizing GPON splitter cabinets, FTC has lowered the quantity and size of the fiber optic feeds, thus reducing the OSP cost from what a 100% Active Ethernet network would have cost.

The PFSA will be fed from an existing network location. The location is an existing telecom hut already established with redundant fiber feeds back to FTC's NOC, and has existing generator backup, and 10 Gbps redundant transport equipment. The network location also has existing GPON equipment with available ports resulting in very minimal network equipment costs compared to what it would have been if FTC were not able to leverage the existing switch hut locations and associated GPON equipment and power components.

Of the 106 homes and businesses passed, FTC has projected to connect 64 homes and businesses. The cost to add a network access point (NAP) to the fiber optic cable, place an aerial or buried drop, mount an optical network terminal (ONT) at the house, and provide fiber-optic connectivity is estimated to average \$1,033.00 per home/business or \$66,112.00 total. Likewise, the cost to add customer premise equipment inside the home using Calix Gigaspire to deliver Mesh-Enhanced Carrier Class Wi-Fi, is estimated to be \$330.00 per home/business or \$21,120.00. The total cost to connect the 64 projected homes is \$87,232.00.

These estimates utilize what is considered by the industry as the most efficient and cost-effective means to deliver gigabit service directly to the home, and are backed by FTC's experience in having already deployed more than 2,180 route miles of fiber-optic cable and connecting more than 15,100 locations.

Does this project emphasize the highest broadband speeds?

Yes. Standard broadband data speeds will be symmetrical - 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload, with 1 Gig (1,000 Mbps) download and 1 Gig (1,000 Mbps) upload also available.

Will this project provide material broadband enhancements to hospitals located in rural areas?

No. There are no hospitals located within the PFSA. However, with expanding broadband access to underserved areas, healthcare will improve dramatically with the use of telehealth services. Telemedicine provides 24/7 access to patient health portals, telemedicine clinicians, remote patient monitoring, telepsychiatry solutions, store and

forward technologies, patient-care education, etc. Telehealth services have been vital through the COVID-19 pandemic to help mitigate the exposure and spread of COVID-19 to healthcare personnel and other patients. Recent policy changes have reduced barriers and increased adoption by both healthcare providers and patients. With Telehealth, patients can receive necessary care that may help them avoid delayed preventative, chronic or routine care. Broadband access in rural areas of DeKalb County, AL are necessary now, more than ever, in providing proper and critical health care access. Research indicates that Telehealth reduces hospital admissions by 25% and overall length of stay by 59%. Telehealth access enables patients to have convenient access to specialists, eliminates the cost to commute long distances, reduces the hours of work missed due to travel, and now helps mitigate potential exposure during a global pandemic. It also makes doctor-patient communication easy, improves the patient's self-care ability, promotes the sharing of educational content that helps maintain and prevent poor health conditions, and promotes a comfortable environment for patient care. Broadband access can also provide important healthy lifestyle resources that may improve the quality of life for those living in this poverty-stricken area.

14.7% of Jackson County's population lives in poverty. 23% of Jackson County, AL population is in poor or fair health. 14.1% of the population in Dutton has a disability. 15% of the Jackson County population is in frequent physical distress and 16% is in frequent mental distress. Counties in the southern and Appalachian regions of the United States tend to have the highest incidence of diabetes prevalence and Jackson County, AL is at 17% compared to the national rate of 7%. 20% of the county are adult smokers. 39% of the county's population is classified as obese adults. 29% are physically inactive and only 47% have access to exercise opportunities. It is reported that 38% of the population gets insufficient sleep. 14% experience food insecurity. There are 13% of Jackson County's population that are uninsured. The ratios for doctor to patient are as follows: Primary Care Physicians 1,850 to 1, Dentists 2,870 to 1 and Mental health providers 2,160 to 1. 27% of children in Jackson County are in poverty. It is reported that there have been 5,903 preventable hospital stays in 2020. The nearest health clinic is a rural health clinic. The serving hospitals for this area are Highlands Medical Center in Scottsboro, AL (11.6 miles or 20 minutes away) and DeKalb Regional Medical Center in Fort Payne, AL (17.2 miles or 21 minutes away).

Will this project support local libraries in this state for the purpose of assisting the libraries in offering digital literacy training pursuant to state library and archive guidelines?

No. There are no local libraries located within the PFSA.

While there are not any physical libraries within the PFSA, broadband access in rural Jackson County would enable access to online libraries such as the Camellia Net-Alabama's Digital Library, Open Library, Project Gutenberg, Google Books, Library of Congress online, and the Alabama Virtual Library - which is free to all citizens in the state.

With broadband access, libraries are available anytime and anywhere to anyone.

Is the applicant a certified Minority Business Enterprise under the Alabama Minority Business Enterprise Program? Or is it certified under another Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program?

No.