



42024 Highway 195 • P.O. Box 780
Haleyville, AL 35565
P (205) 486-5213 • F (205) 485-7127

To whom it may concern:

It is with great enthusiasm that I write to you in support of bringing broadband internet service to Haleyville, Alabama. As the CEO of Lakeland Community Hospital, I cannot place enough emphasis on what the technology will mean to the healthcare of the citizens of Haleyville. Putting aside all the other benefits of broadband technology, I will focus specifically on how it will impact the delivery of healthcare services.

Internet connectivity is vital to our business process. Technology is very important to our day-to-day operations. As our business has grown, we have become increasingly more reliant on technology to help facilitate efficient communication with the patients, as well as provide them with real time status information regarding their health. Currently, maximum available speed of internet connectivity is not sufficient for us to host and provide these services to our patients ourselves. Instead, we must rely on a third party in an area with a stronger, more reliable modern internet infrastructure to host the website and provide these services to our patients. We simply cannot do this with our current internet. We also have to lease our email to a third party server due to the lengthy outages from current providers. This is not suitable enough to depend on as a primary gateway for email which requires near 100% uptime in order to prevent email from being "lost" during an outage. This is a daily struggle with our hospital.

We have a large employee base at Lakeland Community Hospital for our community. We currently employ 160 employees. With the promise of a better internet infrastructure, I can see our employment growing and expanding to help our community. However, this will be a difficult process to complete without a faster and more reliable internet service in our town. We are in desperate need of a fiber optic connection like the one Freedom Fiber offers. This will give our hospital and our community unlimited opportunities and give us the chance to compete in larger markets.

With Freedom Fiber's service, we know we will have access to more modern and stable internet connections. We would be able to refocus the development of our IT systems to allow for the increased bandwidth and provide our patients with more information that is closer to real-time than our current hourly updated process provides. If we took the additional steps of hosting the service locally, we could even provide true on-demand real-time information to our patients. Like most rural hospitals, Lakeland relies on physicians located remotely to help provide services, especially after hours. While we are able to perform an MRI or CT scan for a patient, we need to be able to send a high definition image to the radiologist to read the result to determine the course of treatment for the patient. These image files are massive and slow transmission speeds delay our ability to get the information needed to help patients in a timely manner. In healthcare, time is so very important. This type of connection will be a game changer for us.

Additionally, broadband technology will enable Lakeland to take advantage of the latest technology including telemedicine and digital tools. Access to broadband is critical in rural area as healthcare organizations continue to adopt digital tools to improve patient care.

Currently, it is difficult to maintain connectivity. Without consistent and reliable connections to support digital tools, Haleyville cannot experience the same quality of care as urban areas. Broadband connectivity is critical to the success of rural hospitals in the delivery of the latest medical technology.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Martha McCormick". The signature is fluid and extends across the width of the line.

Martha McCormick, CEO

Lakeland Community Hospital



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Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerita Rye". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gerita" written in a larger, more prominent hand than the last name "Rye".

Gerita Rye

Director of Marketing, Medical Staff Services, Safety, Physician Recruitment & PR

Lakeland Community Hospital