

PROJECT PROPOSAL - FOR PUBLIC POSTING



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Please include:


1. An executive summary of the project:

IdeaTek ' s unique rural broadband deployment project along and around US-route 83 in Western Kansas brings together agricultural economic sustainment and development, intelligent transportation infrastructure, and next-generation scalable fiber-to-the-farm broadband to remote and overlooked agriculture focused farms, ranches, and enterprises. The project partners with the Department of Transportation (dig-once and intelligent transportation system infrastructure “ ITS ”), rural counties, and large farms and ranches in an effort to multiply the effect and opportunity of limited grant funding focused on connecting the unconnected. This development area in western Kansas is anchored around a major ag-corridor of US Highway 83, stretching from Seward County north to Scott County. This area represents millions of dollars in critical agricultural infrastructure that has been struggling for decades to obtain the modern and sustainable connectivity required to keep pace with 21st century agriculture businesses, such as high-tech smart farms. Investment in areas like Western Kansas is critical for the businesses and

2. A description of the location (City(s), County(s), etc.), proposed service areas, partners involved and anticipated improvements.

Location: The proposed service areas are rural and remote unincorporated parts of Seward, Finney, Haskell, and Scott Counties along and near US highway 83.

Partners: High Choice Feeders, LLC, Kansas Department of Agriculture, Kansas Department of Transportation, Kansas Department of Commerce, Kansas State University, Seward County Development Corporation, Seward County, Finney County, Senator John Doll, American Implement, Shannon Francis, City of Holcomb, Seward County Community College, Scott Community Foundation, Representative Jim Minnix, Vulgamore Farms, Senator Jerry Moran, Representative Ron Estes, Haskell County Commission, Sublette Chamber of Commerce, Poky Feeders, Inc., Representative Steven Howe, Seward County Development Committee, Inc., M&M Tire, Andrade Auto Exchange, Inc.

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3. Goals of the project and community need to address including whether the proposed area is unserved or economically distressed or what the compelling need is, if served.

Connect the underserved with scalable, high capacity fiber optic broadband services -100% of the proposed service locations are unserved, receiving less than 100X20 per June 30th 2021 477 Data. See also, attached letters of service need. Address the economically distressed status of these areas and serve the less fortunate and in need users, especially school children with at home reliable broadband at low or no cost by utilizing FCC ACP and lifeline programs. Bolster Kansas ' ag economy and ag investments with next generation infrastructure. This service area represents under connected and unserved cattle ranches and farms, which need the best connectivity to successfully compete in modern times. In a time where costs are rapidly rising it is more critical than ever to have the ability to lower input costs with real time data, connected equipment, and connected crops and livestock. See also, support letter from Kansas Department of Agriculture.

4. The proposed infrastructure and access improvements planned, including the number of proposed connected premisees and community anchor institutions, businesses, or other organizations and the recipients to be served by the project.

The proposed project would pass over 1200 premises, to include:

Residences: 1,186
Businesses:31
Farms: 12
Anchor Institutions: 1

5. The short and long-term investment benefit to the community and service area proposed.

In the short-term, IdeaTek will hire contractors to complete the fiber build, providing an opportunity for employment for Kansas-based workers. In addition, broadband access will provide residents in these areas an immediate opportunity to efficiently work remotely, expanding employment access, as well as access to telehealth and remote education.

In the long-term, communities with fiber infrastructure are far more attractive to new residents and businesses, bringing long-term economic growth and opportunity to the community . When critical, superior broadband access is provided to rural areas, economic growth and opportunity are no longer out of reach.

