

# PROJECT PROPOSAL - FOR PUBLIC POSTING



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Please include:

1. An executive summary of the project:

KanOkla Networks is a community-based telecommunications cooperative headquartered in Caldwell, KS, serving the southcentral Kansas and northcentral Oklahoma areas since 1951 and improving the lives of the customers we serve by connecting them to the world via voice and broadband communications. Founded by innovative farmers determined to build communications connectivity to their farms and rural communities, KanOkla continues this pursuit of delivering the unexpected, modern, robust connectivity in the most remote places of our service territory.

Neighboring this proposed area for nearly 70 years, KanOkla will bury fiber optic connectivity to 147 homes and business with a cost efficient extension of our current fiber optic network, affording these residents opportunities to participate in the modern world of technology. The area has been unproductively served by AT&T rural DSL providing only 6MB wireless speeds over a deteriorated network. Once completed this proposed project will deliver Fiber-to-the-Home capable of up to 2.5 Gig download by 2.5 Gig upload to 147 homes and businesses.

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

The proposed unserved area is the central part of Sumner County to the south, east, and west of the county seat of Wellington in southcentral Kansas. KanOkla currently serves Caldwell, Mayfield, South Haven, Corbin, Perth, and Geuda Springs communities in the south third of the county with fiber optic connectivity placed into service in 2011-13. The proposed area spans 73 plant miles where KanOkla will plow and bore fiber optic cable in conduit and protected from unpredictable high winds, tornadoes, and freezing ice of the open plains. We will utilize a PON network to 147 homes and businesses and utilize existing central office transmission hubs in our current member areas of Mayfield, Corbin, South Haven, and Geuda Springs. A contractor will be hired through a bid process to build the fiber network, and we will utilize our own employees to splice the fiber to connect customers to the network.

The County Commissioners, Sumner County Economic Development, local farmers and residents support the build and will partner with us to expedite ROW access and placement to all area locations. KanOkla will invest private funds for the extension of our network and utilize existing central office buildings and equipment, bringing cost efficiencies to the project.

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.

The goals of the project are:

1. To connect every home and farm with multi-gig capacity, high-speed fiber optic broadband for access to healthcare, education, emergency access, and economic opportunities. The area is unserved; currently receiving only 6MB wireline connection due to its history as a rural AT&T service area.
2. To enable increased productivity and livability in Sumner County. This area is experiencing a return to rural with new homes and returning families with a desire to work from home, participate in the world's online economic opportunities, and live where they want with reliable, life-saving access to healthcare and emergency services.
3. To partner with the Kansas Department of Commerce to bring high speed connectivity to our agricultural producers in our state, raising the livability and productivity quotients for everyone, and contributing to the economic output of one of our state's largest industries. For too long, these rural farming communities have been left behind without robust, reliable broadband. Without grant funding through the Office of Broadband Development, this area will continue to be left behind due to the high cost of putting the up front infrastructure in place.
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.

KanOkla proposes a fiber optic buried cable infrastructure with future-ready, multi-gig speed connectivity which can be upgraded at either end for years to come. 147 homes, home businesses, and agricultural producers will experience dramatic increased access to high capacity and high speed connectivity to provide each and every resident with a lifelong connection to serve them and future generations returning to Kansas to live, work and prosper.

With volunteer fire departments, EMT and ambulance services, this area is in desperate need of life-saving emergency services. As we experienced life at home during the pandemic, connectivity to area schools and community colleges were vital to keep students learning and teachers teaching. The teachers, students, farmers and home-based businesses in this area suffered due to sparse and failing internet connections. Connecting to work from home with NASA or KU Medical Center, for two examples in the current proposed area, the connectivity would not allow productive capabilities. Continuing to work remotely for the foreseeable future, the trend will be changing the way people perceive the combinability of life and work.

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

The short-term benefits to servicing this rural community of farms and homes will be immediate access to the best, highest speed and capacity bandwidth available. These families and agriculture producers will have immediate access to online businesses for repairs, delivery, buy/sell products/commodities in real time, business development, education, healthcare, and peace of mind for access to emergency services to enable them to live out in the beautiful rolling prairies of our state. Access to education and employment will bring additional economic impact to these rural families with exponential returns.

The long-term benefit will be reversing the "brain drain" of our local youth leaving the area after graduation. Robust, high speed broadband will provide the ability to attract young families to the rural areas of our state, returning or new to the area, whether the farms they grew up on or build a house in a remote location, creating the ability to live wherever you desire and still be able to contribute positively to society. The agricultural business will be able to add valuable efficiencies to the increasingly narrow-margins business, and increase new business creation. Ultimately, it will put rural areas on equal footing with urban centers for productivity, economic contribution, and livability.