Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
RECEIVED: 03/16/2022 11:07:25 AM

BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION
For Fiscal Year 2022

Primary Applicant (Name and Address):	Applications MUST be UPLOADED to ERF via the Commission's website, http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx. Refer to section 2.3 for detailed instructions. Applications are due and MUST be uploaded to ERF no later than: **March 17, 2022** at 4:00pm (16:00) Central Time. **Late applications will not be accepted.**
Bruce Telephone Company 620 North Alvey Street Bruce, WI 54819	Contact for further information: PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov
	Date: December 1, 2021

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is seeking applications for Broadband Expansion Grants. The Commission may award one or more grants during Fiscal Year 2022 to public and private entities that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504. This grant round will be funded with bond proceeds authorized by the Wisconsin Building Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). As such, successful applicants are subject to the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the State.

Applicant Certification: In signing this application, the undersigned verifies under penalty of perjury that the Applicant and its employees and agents have not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition with respect to this application; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application; that this application has been independently arrived at without collusion with any other proposer, competitor or potential competitor; that this application has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the opening of applications to any other applicant or competitor; that all of the responses and representations of Applicant in this application are true and correct to the best of the undersigned's knowledge, information, and belief; and that Applicant agrees to, accepts, and will comply with all of the terms and conditions respecting this application and any award of a broadband expansion grant as may be established in a grant award Agreement.

Name of Authorized Representative (Type or Print)	Title	Phone ( )
John Manosky	President	715-868-5111
Signature of Authorized Representative John Manosky	Date 3/9/2022	

SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

Primary Applicant Name Bruce Telephone Company	Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar) $300,325
Federal Employer Identification No. 39-0914899	Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar) $100,775
Contact Name and Title John Manosky President/General Manager	Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar) $401,100
Telephone Number 715-868-5111	Project Name Port Arthur
E-mail Address(es) manoskyj@brucetel.net	Type of Proposed Broadband Service (FTTH, Cable, DSL, etc.) FTTH
Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant	Type of Proposed Project (Last-mile, Middle-Mile, backbone, other) Last Mile
Grant Manager Contact Name	Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number
If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations County of Rusk, Wisconsin 311 Miner Avenue East Ladysmith, WI 54848 715-532-2100	
Brief Project Description (2 sentences) Bruce Telephone Company will construct FTTH to 106 locations in the Port Arthur area of Rusk County Wisconsin. This FTTH infrastructure will connect to Bruce's existing network, with complete redundancy and reliability.	
Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed 1000 Mbps	Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed 1000 Mbps
Minimum Proposed Download Speed to Customer Location 100 Mbps	Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed to Customer Location 25 Mbps
County or Counties served by this project Rusk	Community or Communities served by this project Port Arthur

List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve Centurylink/Lumen speeds of 15/1.5 Mbps, and 15/.75 Mbps	
Does proposed project serve an *unserved* area of the State, as defined in Section 1.4 of the application instruction? (yes/no) YES as marked on the Broadband Map	Is the Applicant certified as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community, or does the grant project propose to serve a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community? (yes/no) Not at this time
For last mile projects or component the expected number of Business Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total business locations passed or with new service access). 0	For last mile projects or components the expected number of Residential Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total residential locations passed or with new service access). 106
Of the improved business locations, how many locations are *unserved*? 0	Of the improved residential locations, how many are *unserved*? 6
For providers that are eligible telecommunications carriers will the proposed broadband service be available to Lifeline customers? (yes/no) YES	Are there any programs available for low-income households to access low-cost service or discounts? (yes/no) YES
Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program? (yes/no) YES	Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Department of Public Instruction and CESA purchasing's Digital Learning Bridge? (yes/no) YES
Did the internet service provider participate in the Public Service Commission's voluntary Broadband Coverage Data Collection in 2021? (yes/no) YES	

FY22 Broadband Expansion Grant Application
Budget & Income Summary

Please complete this form using Microsoft Excel. A PDF copy must be attached to your application as page four. In addition, this form must also be uploaded to ERF in Excel format.

Grant Summary

Grant Applicant:	Project:
Bruce Telephone Company	Port Arthur

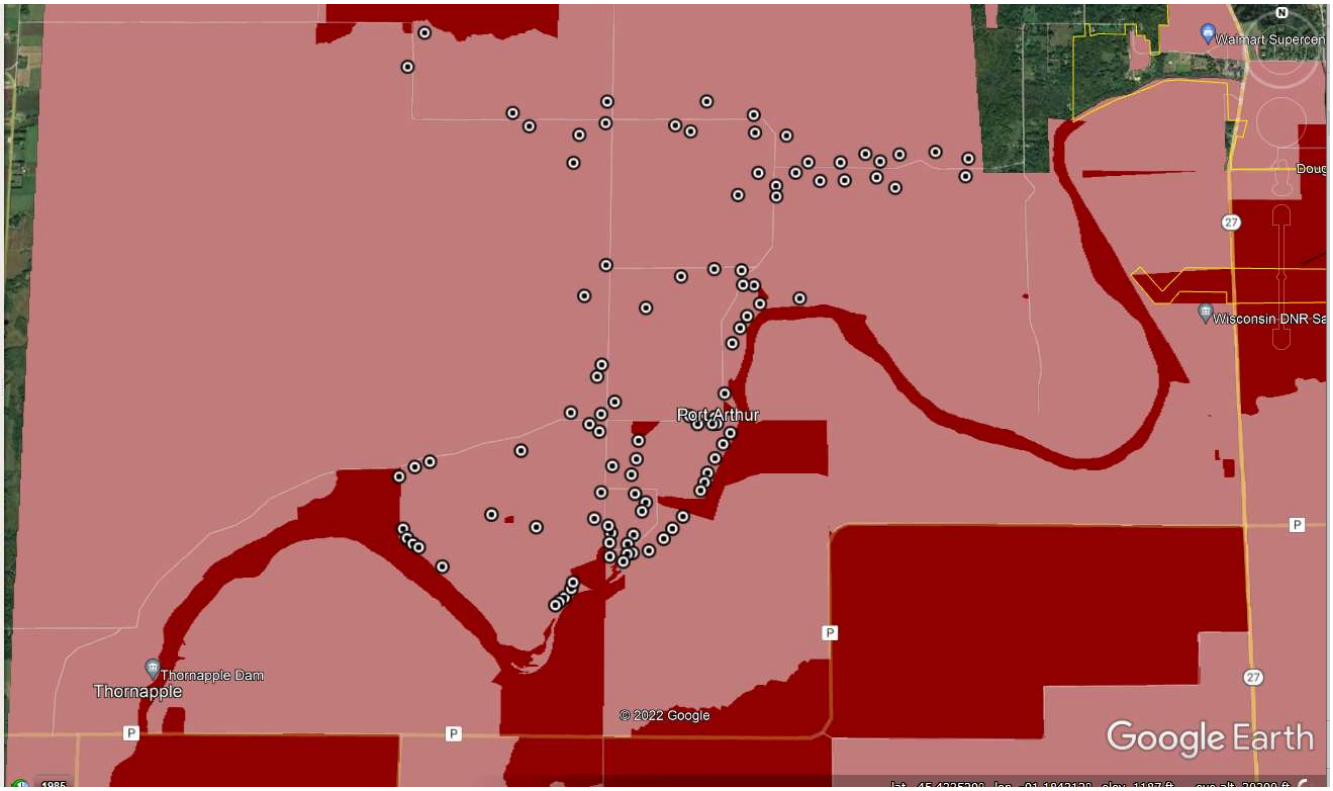
Budget

Line:	Description / Category:	Grant Funds:	Match:	Total:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees	$ 213,422.50	$ 48,487.50	$ 261,910.00
2	Equipment	$ 86,902.18	$ 28,967.41	$ 115,869.59
3	Supplies			$ -
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)	$ -	$ 23,320.00	$ 23,320.00
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees			$ -
6	Travel			$ -
7	Other			$ -
	Total:	$ 300,324.68	$ 100,774.91	$ 401,099.59
		25.1% match requested		

Pledged Contributions

#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1	County of Rusk	Partner	Cash	$ 500.00
2	Bruce Telephone Company	Applicant	Salary	$ 23,320.00
3	Bruce Telephone Company	Applicant	Cash	$ 76,954.91
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
			Total:	$ 100,774.91

Port Arthur Rural Area Proposal



Dark pink/red is unserved area per the WI Broadband map

Light pink is underserved area per the WI Broadband map

Dots indicate the locations Bruce Telephone's Grant Application proposes to cover

An applicant must include the following information in its application to be eligible for this grant and the application must demonstrate satisfaction of indicated requirements.

3.2.1 Applicant identification and contact information

a. The name and address of the entity applying for the grant, and the mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address of one or more contact persons representing the applicant.

   Bruce Telephone Company
   620 North Alvey Street
   Bruce, WI 54819
   715-868-5111
   manoskyj@brucetel.net

b. If the application proposes a public-private partnership, the identity and contact information for all application partners.

   County of Rusk, Wisconsin
   Andy Albarado
   311 Miner Avenue East
   Ladysmith, WI 54848
   715-532-2100

c. The application must show that the applicant is an organization, a telecommunications utility, or a city, village, town, or county that has established a legal partnership or joint venture arrangement with an otherwise qualified organization or telecommunications utility, and as such meets the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504(1).

   Bruce Telephone Company is an established telecommunications company in the State of Wisconsin. Bruce Telephone contacted Rusk County Board to establish a partnership to build high-speed broadband in rural Rusk County.

   See Attachment A for Public-Private Partnership Agreement

3.2.2 Description of the project

Bruce Telephone Company is submitting this application for a FTTH project serving the Port Arthur rural area of Rusk County, Wisconsin. The project will add approximately 10 miles of fiber as an extension of Bruce Telephone's existing fiber network, with dedicated backbone, distribution, feeder and drop fiber to the premises to these locations. The FTTH infrastructure will deliver high-speed broadband with gig capable speeds, along with voice services that meet all quality standards. The broadband connections will have the speed and latency standards for steaming video, VOIP services, telemedicine appointments and monitoring, telework capabilities, and on-line education connections.

a. A static map and description of the area of the State that will be affected by the proposed project.

   A kmz map file sent to pscbroadbanddatea@wisconsin.gov before the application deadline. PDF version attached on Page 4 of the application.

b. If the project area lies within a census block designated as served on the PSC Broadband Map, provide additional documentation to demonstrate the actual broadband service that is available in the proposed project area.

   Not Applicable – all locations are within an unserved or underserved area of the PSC Broadband Map

c. An explanation of how the proposed project will increase broadband access.

   Today, these locations are built with copper cable capable of less than the 25/3 Mbps to qualify as served. Fiber facilities will immediately offer the capability of higher speeds for internet access. The expansion of the FTTH service to these unserved and underserved locations will provide the subscribers a high quality and reliable communications infrastructure to expand their educational, economic, and healthcare opportunities. The locations passed will be able to access speeds up to 1 Gbps upload and 1 Gbps download. Completion of this project will offer a viable teleworking experience for any consumer who utilizes this option. The overall quality of life for these residents will improve by giving them access to web-based

education, telemedicine, business, commerce, and the agricultural industry.

- Potential and expected number of households served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.

  Overall, the project will pass 106 residential locations. 6 which are unserved and 100 which are underserved.

- Potential and expected number of businesses served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.

  There are no brick-and-mortar businesses in this area as it is rural. There is a potential for home-based businesses, given the high-speed internet option proposed by this project.

- Expected number of seasonal residents and tourists served.

  All locations in the proposed project area are year-round homes.

- Estimated download and upload speed of the broadband service packages available for purchase.

  Internet Only*
  75 Mbps - $44.95
  150 Mbps - $54.95
  500 Mbps - $89.95
  1000 Mbps - $109.95

d. A statement whether the proposed project is targeting the "last mile," "middle mile," or backbone portion of the broadband infrastructure.

This project will target Last mile infrastructure for the area and locations contained in the application.

e. A description of the broadband service to be provided, including estimated download and upload speeds, whether the speed is based on dedicated or shared bandwidth, and the technology that will be used. This description may be illustrated by a map or schematic diagram, as appropriate.

Bruce Telephone currently serves customers using IEEE 802.11 Active FTTH. The system is comprised of subscriber gateways at the central office and associated Optical Network Terminals (ONTs) installed at the customer premise. Active Ethernet is a point-to-point technology that directly connects an Optical Line Terminal (OLT) to remote ONTs. Active Ethernet uses separate wavelengths to transmit and receive traffic, and each optical connection provides a dedicated link from the network to the subscriber. All FTTH customers connections are Point-to-Point topologies equipped to provide up to a dedicated 1 Gbps symmetric connection rate. The system is comprised of routers serving subscriber gateways and associated ONTs installed at the customer premise. All electronic systems serving more than one customer are deployed in an active/standby configuration and Bruce Telephone maintains spare inventory for key components. Bruce Telephone will support the proposed service area with the same technology with the intent of providing the same experience to the proposed service areas as are currently being delivered to the rest of our customers.

Bruce Telephone's standards for building their local Optical Distribution Network (ODN) follow or exceed Rural Utility Service (RUS) standards. The armored G.652 compliant fiber optic cable will be direct buried to minimize damage from storms.

The subscriber gateway is a modular system so subscriber electronics additions will also be minor. To minimize the impact of any outage, Bruce Telephone contracts with WIN Technologies (WIN) to provide a sophisticated monitoring system which is staffed 24 hours per day, enabling a quick response to customer needs. Bruce Telephone monitors the links to ensure they do not become overloaded and performs upgrades as necessary to maintain the desired quality of service. Bruce Telephone also performs regular vendor software upgrades available to ensure their network is secure and at the optimum level of performance for that device. The OLT systems support a flexible lineup of high-capacity line cards and modules offering carrier grade services and technologies. All line cards and modules integrate non-blocking, full duplex switches, and the ability to aggregate standards-based Ethernet traffic from the full range of broadband solutions, customer-provided Ethernet switches and customer-provided routers. The system will utilize buried fiber optic cable in derivatives of 96, 48 and 24 strands.

f. For middle mile projects:

Not Applicable

g. A schedule by which the applicant intends to complete the components of the proposed project. The project period is up to 24 months.

Bruce Telephone Port Arthur Project

Project Start:

	After Approval and Grant Agreement	Other Materials and Electronics	Construction Season Year 1	Construction Season Year 2
Task				
Order Materials				
Fiber				
Duct				
DSA				
Pedestals				
Vaults				
NIDs				
Order Electronics				
Shelf Installation Kit				
EF-2 GE-24r2 Cards				
SFPs				
ONTs				
Directional Boring				
Line Placement				
Pedestal Placement				
Drops				
Splicing & ONT Installation				

3.2.3 Itemized Budget

a. In addition to the Summary of Project Budget that is included as page 3, applicants should include a price list or quote for any equipment the applicant intends to purchase, including capital expenditures. The application should also indicate whether any facilities involved would be owned, rented, or leased.

All equipment purchased and used for construction will be owned by Bruce Telephone Company.

Bruce Telephone Port Arthur Project
Equipment Price List

	Quantity		Price	Total
Materials/Equipment				
96 Fiber	18,000	ft	$0.57	$10,260.00
48 Fiber	18,000	ft	$0.33	$5,940.00
24 Fiber	24,000	ft	$0.27	$6,480.00
4 fiber	41,600	ft	$0.27	$11,232.00
Duct	5,000	ft	$0.61	$3,050.00
DSA	1		$20,000.00	$20,000.00
Pedestals	61		$112.96	$6,891.00
Vaults	61		$147.12	$8,974.00
NIDs	106		$14.29	$1,515.00
Electronics				
Shelf Installation Kit	3		$709.99	$2,130.00
EF-2 GE-24r2 Cards	6		$3,597.00	$21,582.00
ONTs	106		$146.00	$15,476.00
SFPs	52		$45.00	$2,340.00
Contractual				
Directional Boring	6,500	ft	$9.00	$58,500.00
Line Placement	60,000	ft	$1.90	$114,000.00
Drop Placement	41,600	ft	$1.90	$79,040.00
Pedestal Placement	61		$170.00	$10,370.00
Labor				
Splicing & ONT Installation	106		$220.00	$23,320.00
TOTAL				$401,100.00

b. The application must show that the grant, if awarded, will not subsidize the expenses of a telecommunications provider or the monthly bills of telecommunications customers.

The total dollar amount of the project is listed and accounted for in the equipment list. No grant money will be used to subsidize the on-going expenses of Bruce Telephone Company, nor will it be used to subsidize the end user monthly billing amounts.

c. The application must show that the grant funds requested will be used for the sole purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in the underserved areas covered by the application.

Bruce Telephone agrees to demonstrate that all grant funds requested in the application will be used for the sole purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in the un/underserved areas described in this application. Bruce Telephone will self-fund its contribution to the Project's construction and equipment costs.

3.2.4 Priority factors supporting the application

a. **Matching funds**. A description of the matching funds the applicant will invest in the proposed project, if any. For each element, indicate the type of match (cash, salary expense, or in-kind contribution). If the application is submitted by a partnership, identify the partner responsible for providing each element of the proposed matching funds. *Note: The requirement for this information is satisfied via inclusion of the completed Funding Statement as page 4 of the application.*

See Page 4 of this application – Budget Summary

- If available, provide documentation to support an offer of matching funds (minutes of a town board meeting, a letter from a prospective customer or local government official, etc.).

See Attachment A – Public-Private Partnership Agreement

- **Public-private partnerships.** If the public-private partnership is memorialized in a joint venture agreement or other writing, provide a copy of that agreement.

See Attachment A for the agreement with Rusk County to contribute $500 to the cost of building this infrastructure.

b. **Existing broadband service**. A list of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve.

CenturyLink/Lumen	15/1.5 Mbps	DSL
CenturyLink/Lumen	15/.75 Mbps	DSL
CenturyLink/Lumen	25/2 Mbps	DSL

This project will not be duplicating any existing high-speed broadband infrastructure. Lumen has ADSL service in the underserved areas, but the speeds are not sufficient for today's internet needs. There is no fiber in any of the proposed area, whether it is unserved or underserved. There are no wireline speeds available that meet the 25/3 Mbps threshold.

- Provide a list of mobile wireless service providers that overlap the footprint of the proposed project.

  AT&T Mobility – Form 477 no speeds available
  T-Mobile – Form 477 no speeds available
  Verizon Wireless – Form 477 no speeds available

c. **Project impact**. A description of the geographic area and the population, both in terms of absolute numbers and likely users, which will be served by the proposed project. Indicate the number of anticipated residential and business customers in the project area, if known. Explain the speed and quality of internet service that will be available. Include information about the range of packages available for purchase. Provide details on any low-income access programs and steps the project will take to support adoption.

In the project area, there are 106 households, no brick-and-mortar businesses. Based on the information from the U.S. Census (July 2021 update) there are 2.18 persons per household in Rusk County, Wisconsin. That equates to an approximate population of 231 people that will reap the benefits of high-speed broadband connections.
Bruce Telephone Company will construct FTTH infrastructure, provisioned via a buried fiber network. The entire network will be redundant and therefore reliable. Bruce Telephone will offer speed packages ranging from an affordable 25/3 Mbps tier up to a 1 Gbps symmetrical tier. This will ensure that customers bandwidth needs are met. By including a diversity of tiers, we safeguard the affordability of service for every household in the proposed area. Bruce Telephone is a participant in the Federal Lifeline Program and the new Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which offers a $30 discount per month per household for low-income qualified households. We will offer the ACP program to these locations if awarded the grant. Each household will be given the information upon completion of the project which includes instructions on how to sign up and qualify for the credit. Bruce Telephone will continue community outreach of this program ensuring that its availability is known and we are there to assist any subscriber who may need the assistance.

Residents will benefit from the project as it will allow more people to work from home, enhance access to medical and public safety facilities, increase access to educational opportunities, and encourage virtual health care prospects.

d. **Scalability**. A description of how the proposed project could expand or improve the broadband service it delivers, while maintaining the quality of its broadband service. This description should include specific projected increases in the following parameters that are known at the time of the application:

The demand for bandwidth seems without limit. Service providers who invest in reliable and proven FIBER network infrastructure can have confidence that the installed infrastructure is scalable to the bandwidth needs of today and the future. Providers and consumers can rely on a high quality of service over the lifetime of the investment.

The ultimate in scalable bandwidth delivery to the consumer is a Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) network. A FTTH network connects the network exchange and the home using a fiber optic link. The bandwidth of a FTTH network is not limited by the fiber connection, but by the transmission equipment on the link. Operators can upgrade their respective FTTH networks simply by replacing the equipment at the terminals of the fiber lines. Fiber has a long usable life. With that in mind, the FTTH architecture saves time and money, as the plant does not need to be replaced for many decades. Consumer speeds can be upgraded simply by replacing transmission equipment. After decades of use, any fiber that needs replacing is also easily and affordably swapped by blowing new fiber through any conduit that was placed with the original fiber.

Bruce Telephone Company will be constructing an active ethernet network at the addresses listed in this application if grant money is awarded. This network design allows for flexibility in designing the network for ultimate scalability and function. The fiber infrastructure allows for higher bandwidth and consistent reliability over counterpart technologies like wireless or satellite. Active Ethernet assures Quality of Service (QoS) by guaranteeing necessary bandwidth for each service and each user. QoS features are used to ensure proper service prioritization and delivery. All information that travels the optical network is encrypted, which gives the consumer an additional level of security.

The entire FTTH network is redundant, giving the company and consumer confidence that they will stay connected at all times. Bruce Telephone can quickly expand the existing equipment to meet an increase in customers by adding additional shelves and cards. The network design and fiber counts used in the proposal can easily be scaled to accommodate additional locations if the need arises. We can expand from the 106 locations to many more by simply adding additional equipment. The proposed area is in rural

Rusk County, WI. The surrounding area is in Bruce Telephone's ILEC area and CenturyLink/Lumen's ILEC territory. Bruce Telephone can add additional locations to the network if demand suggests the need, either by adding another choice for customers or if the area is not served by fiber and higher speeds are needed.

Bruce Telephone will offer high-speed internet to these locations as well as voice service to any location that is interested in those services.

The next generation offers symmetrical 10 Gig service over the same fiber. Bruce Telephone can easily evolve utilizing the same infrastructure to reach these much higher speeds. This is an ultimate example in scalability and investment stability.

- **Economic development**. A description of how the proposed project will promote job growth or retention, expand the property tax base or improve the overall economic vitality of the municipality or region.

The proposed project is likely to have a local and regional economic impact since broadband speeds will increase to levels that can readily accommodate individuals and businesses seeking to access services and projects available today via the Internet. The proposed project will increase the ability for customers to work from home, increase educational options, allow businesses greater access to on-line opportunities, increase medical access options for both patients and providers, including savings utilizing virtual health care technologies, and increase access to government programs and services.

FTTH service also increases the value of homes, improving the real estate market. Homes will increase in monetary value, in addition, having fast and reliable broadband service available will attract many potential buyers who may otherwise choose to live in a different area due to their reliance on broadband connectivity.

Bruce Telephone believes that sustainable broadband adoption will transform this underserved area into a highly productive rural community. The demand is present today for advanced technology and high-speed broadband. FTTH will empower the area by providing the opportunity to be proficient users of broadband technology. This use and development of broadband will provide various home-based business options, stimulate economic growth, and encourage innovation and investment. Due to the rural nature of the proposed area, providing fiber optic based broadband

service will allow local farmers to incorporate and benefit from the latest agri-business technologies. These technologies would include precision agriculture which seeks to use new technologies to increase crop yields and profitability while lowering the levels of traditional inputs needed to grow crops. If funding is awarded, Bruce Telephone will look at expanding broadband buildouts into additional adjoining underserved areas to extend the benefits of a fiber-based network serviced by a local provider that gives back to the communities it serves.

e. **Effect upon broadband service to adjacent areas**. A description of whether the proposed project will or will not impair the ability of a broadband service provider or competing broadband service provider to extend broadband service to areas adjacent to the proposed project area.

This project will not impair the ability of a service provider to extend broadband service to areas adjacent to the proposed project area. Bruce Telephone does not believe the incumbent's existing broadband services is a commitment to local residences or that it will be impaired in any way. There is no history or suggestion that incumbent facilities in the proposed project area would, as a result, incur higher average costs per existing or forecasted subscriber. In fact, the absence of incumbent broadband service reported by subscribers in the application area suggests no facility investment has been a consideration for the incumbent. Bruce Telephone has fiber facilities that are already exist adjacent to the proposed area. The proposed build-out would extend the current Bruce Telephone service area and provide broadband speeds that far exceed the services that are currently available to the population in the proposed area.

3.2.5 Other information supporting the application

a. A description of applicant's history or experience constructing broadband communications facilities in the State and elsewhere.

Telephone service in the Bruce, WI area began at the turn of the century with the settlers and was organized as a cooperative. After World War I, it was purchased by Wisconsin Telephone Company. They rebuilt the existing lines in the area and added more. In November 1940, the business was purchased by David J. Manosky, Sr. and became Bruce Telephone Company, Inc. It originally began with just 72 subscribers. By 1984, under the management of David J. Manosky, Jr., the plant was servicing 1,250 subscribers. Present day, under the management of his son John D. Manosky, Bruce Telephone Company, Inc. is serving subscribers with not only telephone, but internet and Digital TV service as well. Lines have changed from iron wire, to aerial and buried twisted copper pair, to fiber optic cable. Bruce Telephone Company, Inc. is proud to be a locally owned and operated service provider for the past 79 years and is happy to continue to be for many, many, more. Bruce Telephone Company thrives on providing the most reliable and advanced products and services with the best customer care possible. Our knowledgeable staff are also members of the community and take pride in serving its customers. Located in the town of Bruce, WI we are always ready and willing to answer any questions you may have and solve any issues or concerns with any of the services we offer.

Bruce Telephone Company, Inc. is an incumbent local exchange carrier, providing voice, Internet, and IPTV service throughout our 222 square mile territory. Currently, Bruce Telephone serves approximately 840 voice customers, and 1,104 Internet customers.

Bruce Telephone Company, Inc. is submitting this application for a project serving the rural Port Arthur area of Rusk County, just outside the Bruce Telephone Exchange. The project will build approximately 10 miles of fiber as an extension of Bruce Telephone's existing fiber network, with dedicated backbone, distribution, feeder, and drop fiber to premises in this area. Using these new facilities, Bruce Telephone will enhance service to this service area. As a result of this project, Bruce Telephone will be able to provide Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) broadband to 106 households in Rusk County Wisconsin. The project will also provide a pathway to serve more homes in this area in the future.

This area is currently served with copper facilities by Centurylink/Lumen. The expansion of the FTTH broadband service to this unserved area will provide

subscribers a high quality and reliable communications infrastructure to expand their educational, economic, and healthcare opportunities. The locations passed will be able to access speeds up to 1 Gbps download / 1 Gbps upload.

Completion of this project will offer a viable teleworking experience for any consumer who utilizes this prevalent option. The overall quality of life for these residents will improve with the high-speed offerings, giving them access to web-based education, telemedicine, business commerce, and agricultural industry.

Bruce Telephone has been building active ethernet fiber infrastructure for several years inside and outside of its study area boundary. Inside our study area, we have built fiber as it has been affordable, with only a few areas left to build. We have done this through our own funding or with ACAM support in some areas. Bruce Telephone successfully completed a 2020 Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant for Chippewa Valley road in southern Rusk County. Bruce Telephone was awarded CAF-Phase II auction monies to build a fiber network to unserved areas within Rusk County, WI, and was awarded RDOF auctions monies. WE have seen excellent take rates in each of these areas because of the rural need for high-speed technologies. This proves Bruce Telephone's commitment to customers and delivering high-speed services to local communities. We offer affordable packages to those customers and keep them connected for all of the work, education, health care, business, and entertainment needs. Bruce Telephone designs, engineers, builds, and maintains these FTTH networks with skilled staff and a commitment to our customers.

b. A description of how the proposed project will or will not duplicate existing broadband infrastructure.

   There are no landline or fixed wireless providers offering broadband service at the required levels in the project area, therefore no duplication of existing broadband service will occur.

c. A description of an applicant's financial ability to undertake the proposed broadband construction project.

   Bruce Telephone Company is a well-established company doing business in the State of Wisconsin. Bruce Telephone is in good standing and has been in business for over 79 years as a privately owned and operated family business. Bruce Telephone is financially stable and will be financing our portion of the proposed project through cash on hand and in-house labor.

d. For middle mile projects, state the terms under which the applicant will make its middle mile fiber resource available to last mile providers.

Not Applicable

e. For middle mile routes, state the amount of fiber capacity, by number of fiber strands in a cable, that the applicant has been reserved for public use.

Not Applicable

f. A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of individuals to access health care service from home, including any impact upon the costs of those services.

All customers in this area that request broadband service from Bruce Telephone will have more than adequate broadband speed available to access health care facilities from their home. The service will assist in reducing health care costs for transportation to medical facilities, office visit charges, and will provide faster response times. The bandwidth available is more than sufficient for on-line video visits, on-line monitoring, chart checks, and access to medical facilities across the globe.

Aging adults or those with disabilities will benefit from a FTTH build-out in this underserved area of Rusk County. Fiber broadband connections in residential homes, aging adults or individuals with disabilities may remain in homes longer and delay or avoid institutionalized living. The capabilities and benefits of health and safety monitoring devices on a 100% fiber broadband network allow aging adults and those with disabilities the ability to remain independent and confident knowing they are safe at home. Older adults will maximize their independence at a much lesser cost than institutionalized living. Furthermore, professional and family caregivers have peace of mind knowing they can check in with patients and family members as much as necessary using remote smart devices that can monitor the activity inside and outside a home or business using internet-connected cameras, lights, and motion sensors.

g. A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of students to access educational opportunities from home.

Who knew that a global pandemic would shake up our daily lives in such a profound fashion? School systems at every level were forced to facilitate on-line education to all students and teachers. Some of these students did not and continue to not have connections to broadband services that are capable of video conferencing, research needs, or overall internet connections needed to complete homework assignments. The government assisted with financial programs to help families get and stay connected during the COVID pandemic. As more of these programs are coming to an end, grants are becoming available to fix the digital divide for infrastructure that is just not available in rural high-cost areas. Broadband makes it possible for elementary, middle, high school, and college students to complete homework assignments and access advanced topics and complete college courses. Access to online classes increases opportunities for K-12 students and college students while providing professional development and career advancement opportunities.

h. A description of actions taken by a city, village, town, or county in support of the grant application that have not been discussed in the context of a public-private partnership above, including but not limited to:

The County of Rusk, Wisconsin will waive county permitting fees for this project.

Neither Rusk County nor Port Arthur is certified as a Broadband Forward! or Telecommuter Forward! program. Bruce Telephone will encourage each to investigate the program and assist in any way to get certified.

i. Letters and messages in support of the application submitted by prospective customers, local government officials, and other interested persons.

See Attachment A

j. Any other equitable factor that the applicant desires to discuss, including one or more of the factors in Wis. Stat. § 196.03(6) that the applicant believes its project would advance. In discussing this element, the following information may be useful:

Bruce Telephone employs skilled technicians and customer service specialists who provide support either by phone or onsite depending on the nature of the issue. Each interested customer will receive a new customer packet which explains our service offerings, prices, equipment, and programs available to assist in their broadband experience, education, and financial assistance. Our goal is to resolve any trouble call with the first call or visit.

- Information that the applicant intends to use to promote better broadband adoption and use.

We will market our services to this area upon completion of the grant project, including our customer welcome packet, a description of services, and a link to our website which lists all services, programs and assistance that is available to this area. Our customer service staff, technicians, and managers will be available to answer questions, assist with set up, and digital literacy if needed.

- A description of a program or outreach to provide assistance to individuals of low income.

Complete information on the Universal Service Fund Lifeline Assistance program offered is available on its website, on our website, in our marketing materials, and each office staff member is well versed in answering questions and assisting with applications for qualification approval. Bruce Telephone is also a participant in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) which allows for a $30 monthly broadband credit to qualified households. This program will be offered in this area as well. We will include links to the website, application site, and information page on our company's website. Our staff is also available to answer any questions, educate customers, and assist with the application process.

ATTACHMENT A

A PRIVATE PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH BRUCE TELEPHONE COMPANY,

FOR A FIBER BROADBAND EXPANSION PROJECT IN RUSK COUNTY

THIS AGREEMENT made on February 28, 2022, by and between Bruce Telephone Company and Rusk County.

TERM OF AGREEMENT: This is a one-time agreement effective on the date of signing.

WHEREAS, the County of Rusk, a political subdivision of the State of Wisconsin, seeks to help provide access to resources and the support structure necessary for economic development within its boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Bruce Telephone Company, proposes to expand broadband capability to reach underserved and un-served residences and businesses in Rusk County where such service may be currently limited.

SCOPE OF AGREEMENT: Rusk County will provide a $500 funding commitment to support the proposed FY2022 Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant Program application for fiber broadband expansion project in the Port Arthur area of Rusk County. This contribution to the project is contingent upon Bruce Telephone Company being awarded funding and will be payable upon completion of construction.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have caused this Agreement to be entered into effect on the date first set forth above.

Rusk County

By: _____

Name: Andy Albarado, Admin. Coordinator

Date: March 2, 2022

Bruce Telephone Company

By: _____

Name: John Manosky

Title: President