Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
RECEIVED: 03/17/2022 10:26:23 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.**
La Valle Telephone Cooperative S1421 State Highway 33 PO BOX 28 La Valle, WI 53941 608-985-7201	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 (608) 985-7201
John Bartz	CEO/GM	
Signature of Authorized Representative	Date	
[signature]	3-15-2022	

SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

Primary Applicant Name La Valle Telephone Cooperative	Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar) $3,529,430.00
Federal Employer Identification No. 39-0927042	Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar) $2,352,950.00
Contact Name and Title John Bartz, CEO/GM	Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar) $5,882,380.00
Telephone Number (608)985-7201	Project Name Richland County
E-mail Address(es) jbartz@mwt.net	Type of Proposed Broadband Service (FTTH, Cable, DSL, etc.) FTTH
Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant N/A	Type of Proposed Project (Last-mile, Middle-Mile, backbone, other) Last-mile
Grant Manager Contact Name N/A	Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number N/A
If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations Richland County – 221 West Seminary Street, Richland Center, WI 53581 – 39-6005735	
Brief Project Description (2 sentences) La Valle Telephone Cooperative proposes to provide FTTH services to approximately 460 residential and business subscribers covering approximately 120 fiber route miles and encompassing 58 square miles in Juneau County. The need for this service is evidenced by the willingness of Richland County to enter into a PPP Agreement and contribute cash to this project.	
Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed 1Gbps	Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed 500Mbps
Minimum Proposed Download Speed to Customer Location 30 Mbps	Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed to Customer Location 15 Mbps

County or Counties unserved by this project	Community or Communities unserved by this project
Richland County	Townships of Rockbridge, Willow, Richland & Ithaca
List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve Frontier Communications & US Cellular	
Does proposed project serve an *unserved* area of the State, as defined in Section 1.4 of the application instruction? (yes/no) YES	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) NO
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). 3	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). 457
Of the improved business locations, how many locations are *unserved*? 3	Of the improved residential locations, how many are *unserved*? 457
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) NO	Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Department of Public Instruction and CESA purchasing's Digital Learning Bridge? (yes/no) NO
Did the internet service provider participate in the Public Service Commission's voluntary Broadband Coverage Data Collection in 2021 (yes/no) YES	

Summary of Project Budget and Income Summary

FY22 Broadband Expansion Grant Application
Budget & Income Summary

Wisconsin Broadband Office

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:
La Valle Telephone Cooperative	Richland County

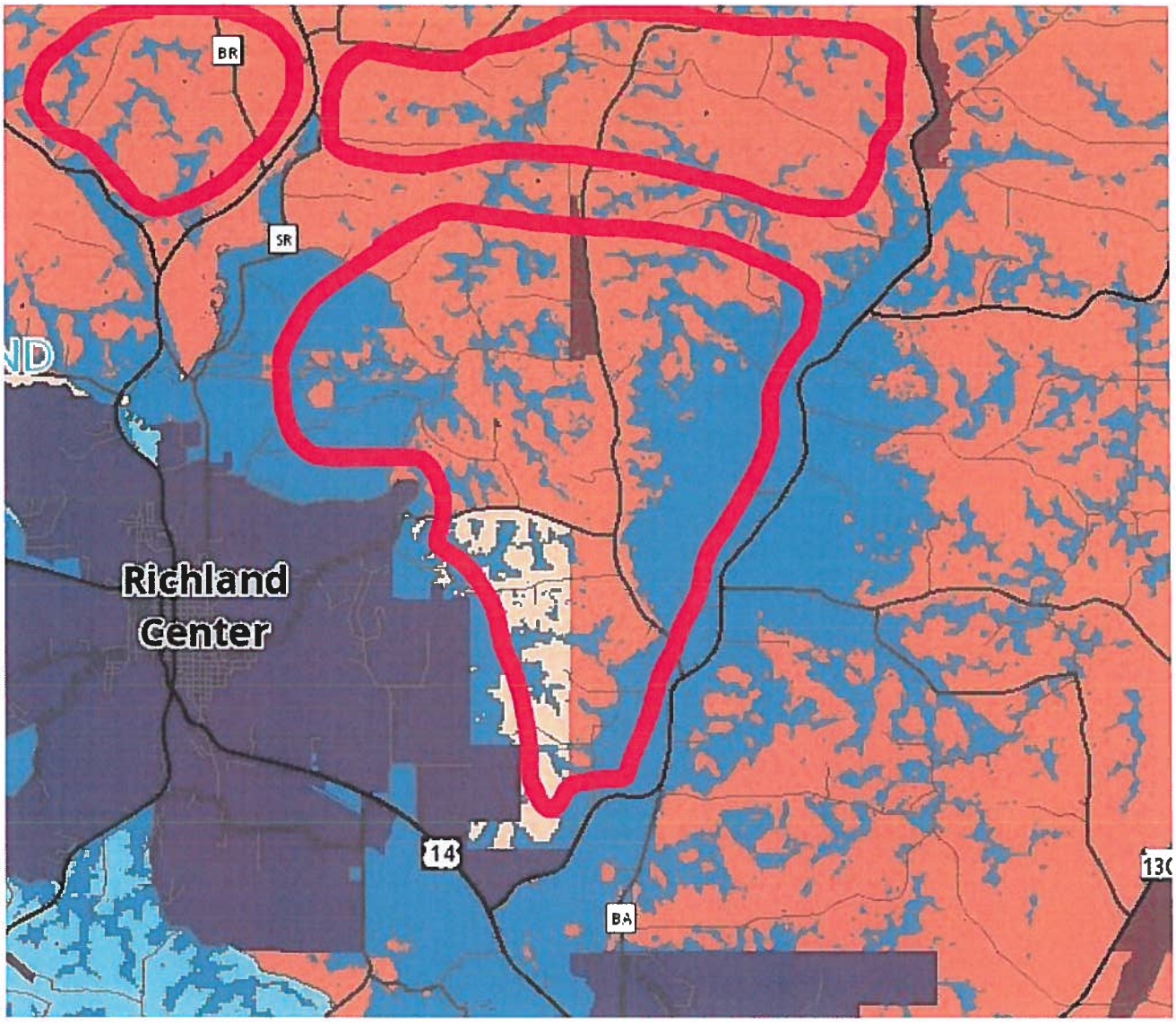
Budget

Line:	Description / Category:	Grant Funds:	Match:	Total:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees	$ 2,250,000.00	$ 1,500,000.00	$ 3,750,000.00
2	Equipment	$ 1,066,430.00	$ 710,950.00	$ 1,777,380.00
3	Supplies	$ 90,000.00	$ 60,000.00	$ 150,000.00
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)	$ 120,000.00	$ 80,000.00	$ 200,000.00
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees	$ 3,000.00	$ 2,000.00	$ 5,000.00
6	Travel			$ -
7	Other			$ -
	Total:	$ 3,529,430.00	$ 2,352,950.00	$ 5,882,380.00
		40.0% match requested		

Pledged Contributions

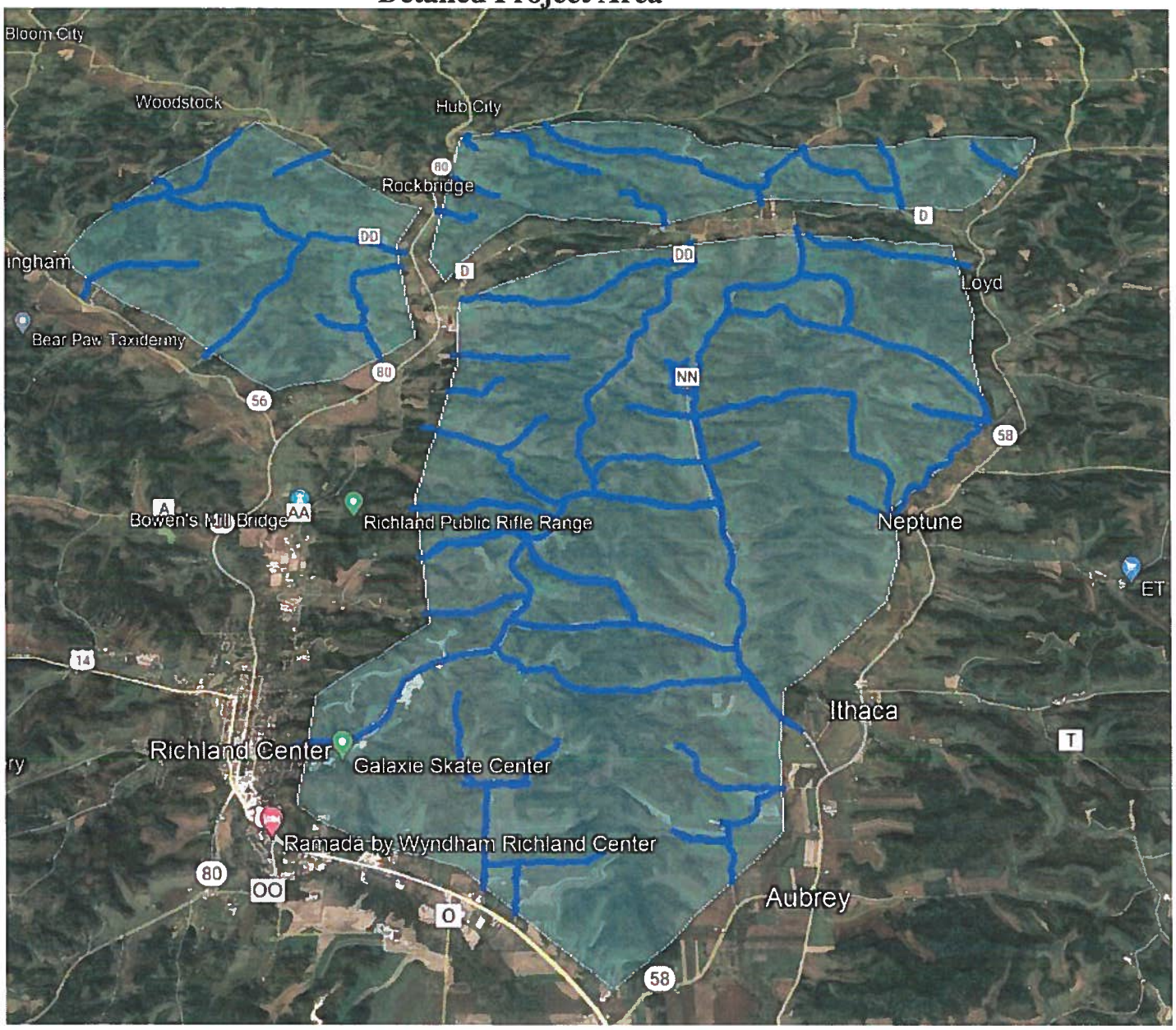
#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1	La Valle Telephone Cooperative	Applicant	Cash	$ 1,762,950.00
2	Richland County	Partner	Cash	$ 590,000.00
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
			Total:	$ 2,352,950.00

MAPS #1
Wisconsin Broadband Map



The area highlighted in red is the proposed project area. These areas are either unserved or underserved. These areas are currently surrounded by FTTH providers. This will achieve the PSC goal of "Filling in the Gaps".

MAPS #2
Detailed Project Area



The light blue shaded area represents the entire project area and the dark blue lines indicate the roads within the project area.

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Section	Application Documents:
1.1	Broadband Expansion Grant Application
1.2 & 1.3	Summary of Grant Application
1.4	Summary of Project Budget and Income Summary
1.5 & 1.6	Maps

Map #1 Wisconsin Broadband Map showing:
- unserved area
- underserved area

Map #2 Detail Map of the Project Area
- The red line identifies the Project Area

1.7	Table of Contents
2	Executive Summary
3	General Application Requirements including Table 1 & Table 2
Table 3	History of LA VALLE Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Table 4	Summary of Broadband Area Adjacent Services

Exhibits:

A Letters of Support

Richland County

B Public Private Partnership Agreement

Richland County

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

La Valle Telephone Cooperative, Inc. ("LA VALLE") currently provides high speed fiber broadband and Internet access in 100% of its service territory in some of the most rural areas of South Central Wisconsin.

LA VALLE provides broadband and Internet access using all buried fiber plant facilities. In 2016 LA VALLE began a project to provide Fiber-To-The-Home ("FTTH") throughout its service territory. This FTTH project made broadband speeds of up to 1 Gigabit per second ("Gbps") available to all business and residents in the area. LA VALLE has currently completed a FTTH network to 100% of LA VALLE customer base.

LA VALLE is applying for a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant to build a FTTH project in a hard to serve area. This Project proposes a FTTH network including 120 miles of main line fiber encompassing 58 square miles in a very rural area in Richland County. This fiber route will pass 460 locations ("Project"). This Project area will border the LA VALLE ILEC service territory which is already served by a FTTH broadband network. The Project area will also border the 2019, 2021, 2021 AND ARPA 2022 grants received. See Section 1.5 & 1.6 for maps of the Project area. The area is currently unserved by incumbent provider, Frontier Communications. Although some of the area within the Project is shown as underserved, the partnership with Richland County and their contribution in cash proves this area is in desperate need of a fast and reliable broadband service.

The Wisconsin Broadband Coverage map does show that most of this Project area is underserved by a large mobile wireless provider. This mobile wireless provider cannot consistently provide voice or broadband service to these customers. Because of the dense forest and hilly areas there is minimal to no mobile wireless broadband coverage.

This area is currently underserved with copper facilities by Frontier Communications. As provided in the Project area map in Section 1.5, some areas are considered underserved, but most are unserved. These 457 resident locations and 3 business locations are underserved or unserved over copper facilities limiting them on access to health care service from their homes; the ability of students to access education opportunities from their homes, and access to the Internet to accommodate the needs of today's users.

LA VALLE has received many requests from residents and businesses in this area and currently has several customers asking for broadband service. This project would initially provide service to over 760 locations in and along the fiber routes in the grant application area. See Map Section 1.6. The Project would also provide a pathway to serve more homes in this area in the future including homes inside and outside the designated fiber routes. The limited population and rural area provide many challenges to construct a fiber network. Due to the rugged terrain and low location density per square mile the construction cost per location is high. This rural farming area will never be served without a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant.

FTTH is the perfect solution for this service area as it has upside potential for broadband speeds which is almost unlimited. LA VALLE would install a fiber network using the latest technologies available which not only provide high speed broadband for Internet access, but also could provide high quality television services including Wisconsin news and sports that are not currently available to this part of Wisconsin. LA VALLE would provide any speed requested, but typical broadband speeds with Internet access chosen by customers are:

Mbps Speed Down/Up	Resident	Business
30/15	$ 63.00	$ 63.00
60/30	73.00	73.00
120/60	83.00	83.00
200/100	93.00	93.00
500/250	130.00	130.00
1 Gbps/500 Mbps	200.00	200.00

LA VALLE is requesting funding from the Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant Program to expand broadband service Richland County. The amount being requested is $3,529,430 which is 60% of the construction cost of the Project. Due to the rugged terrain and sparse population, this 60% match is the only way to get these locations a fast and reliable fiber broadband connection.

The broadband map shows portions of the Project as underserved. This area is currently underserved by Frontier Communications via an aged copper infrastructure and cannot provide the fast and reliable speeds the residents of this area desperately need. This is evidenced by Richland County speaking on behalf of their residents and entering into a Private-Public Partnership Agreement with the contribution of cash to complete this Project.

LA VALLE believes this project is exactly what the Wisconsin legislature had in mind when this program was developed and emphasized service to unserved areas as a key factor when awarding a grant.

This Project helps accomplish the goal of the Wisconsin Broadband Plan - 2019 which states "The Broadband Plan's overarching goal is for every Wisconsinite to have affordable access to broadband service, if they so choose, by January 1, 2025." The Broadband Plan is based on investments in Broadband as outlined in the 2019 - 2021 and 2022-2023 biannual budgets along with the Governor's proposed speed goal of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up for all Wisconsin homes and businesses.

Without a Broadband Grant this unserved/underserved area may never get Broadband service as provided in the Wisconsin Broadband Plan - 2019.

LA VALLE staff will work with the Commission staff to provide maps of this Project in an electronic format.

LA VALLE applied for and has been awarded Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grants totaling $2,104,250 for years 2019, 2020, 2021 and ARPA 2022. These Projects have been completed or will be completed in 2022 and will provide over 585 locations with broadband service.

LA VALLE's plan is to continue to build FTTH networks in underserved and unserved areas using grants and LA VALLE funding, to help accomplish the Wisconsin Broadband Plan - 2019.

3.0 GENERAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Application organization and format

This application should be typed, converted to a PDF format and uploaded to the Commission server using the ERF system.

3.2 Mandatory application requirements

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.

Name of Entity: La Valle Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Mailing Address: S1421 State Highway 33
PO Box 28
La Valle, Wisconsin 53941

Main Telephone Number: 608-985-7201

Contacts: - John Bartz, CEO/GM - jbartz@mwt.net

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

This application does propose a public/private partnership agreement with Crawford County:
Richland County – Clinton Langreck, clinton.langreck@co.richland.wi.us
221 West Seminary Road
Richland Center, WI 53581
(608)649-5960

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. s 196.504(1).

LA VALLE Telephone Cooperative is an Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier ("ILEC") certified to provide telecommunications service in the State of Wisconsin pursuant to Section 196.50(2)(b) of the Wisconsin State Statute. LA VALLE's PSCW Utility # is 3090 and currently serves the NECA Wisconsin study area #330899.

3.2.2. Description of the project

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

The Maps on pages 5 & 6 show the proposed broadband Project area. This Project a Fiber-To-The-Home ("FTTH") network in Rural Crawford County. The Project area is in the CenturyLink incumbent serving area. As provided in the Executive Summary this Project includes an underserved area.

Table 1: Project Area Advertised Speed:

Service Provider:	***Type***	***Down***	***Up***
Underserved Area:			
Frontier Communications	*VDSL*	*6.0*	*1.0*
US Cellular	*Cellular*	*2.0*	*.064*
VIASAT	*Satellite*	*35.0*	*3.0*
HughesNet	*Satellite*	*25.0*	*3.0*
Unserved Area:			
Frontier Communications	*ADSL*	*1.0*	*.128*
US Cellular	*Cellular*	*2.0*	*.064*

The underserved and unserved area is defined by Map #1 on page5 and includes about 460 locations. LA VALLE will provide a FTTH network to all locations requesting LA VALLE broadband service.

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

We argue the areas indicated as underserved are not actually underserved as evidenced by the amount of phone calls we receive and the amount of complaints the County Board receives from their constituents. This is further evidenced by the fact that Richland County has entered into a PPP agreement and has agreed to contribute cash for this Project on behalf of their constituents.

The current Frontier Communications network has copper facilities to all 460 locations. Because of the long copper loops speeds are limited. At some locations these speeds are only available by bonding two copper pairs into one broadband circuit.

LA VALLE will provide a FTTH network to all 460 locations

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

This proposed project would increase broadband access as follows:

1) Potential and expected number of households underserved:

   a) *Potential households in underserved and unserved areas are 460. Expected households to be served are 370. The remaining households are expected to be served at their request as their need for reliable high speed broadband service changes.*

2) Potential and expected number of businesses underserved:

a) *Potential business locations in the underserved and unserved areas are 3. Expected business locations to be served are all 3. Once broadband service is available in this area, it will make it more attractive for new businesses to move here. Broadband service will be provided as requested.*

3) Expected number of seasonal residents and tourists underserved.

This region is in the driftless area and is renowned for its natural beauty. Tourists from all over the United States visit this area. This number is hard to quantify, but we would expect tourist numbers to be in the thousands as the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway lies within 30 minutes of the Project area. Seasonal residents will number in the hundreds as world class fishing and hunting lie in the Project area with many seasonal cabins.

4) Estimated download and upload speeds of the broadband service packages available for purchase.

LA VALLE will provide broadband down/up speeds at a minimum 30 Mbps/15 Mbps with 1 Gbps/500 Mbps available to all locations.

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

The proposed Project is targeted for last mile of the dedicated broadband infrastructure. LA VALLE is currently providing wireline broadband service and has access to adequate middle mile and backbone Internet access.

e. A description of the broadband service to be provided, including estimated download and upload speeds, whether that 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.

LA VALLE is currently providing dedicated wireline broadband services using fiber facilities. Speeds are as provided in the Executive Summary.

LA VALLE will provide broadband service using a Fiber-To-The-Home network with Gigabit Passive Optical Network ("GPON") technology. This fiber network will be similar to the fiber network currently in place and used in the LA VALLE ILEC service territory. The latest technology will be used to provide the highest quality of service.

This Project fiber network will be connected to the existing fiber network and broadband electronics used to provide broadband services in the LA VALLE ILEC service territory.

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

If the grant application for the Project is approved by June, 2022, LA VALLE is proposing the following schedule:

June – July, 2022	*Order equipment/Staking*

August, 2022 - Aug., 2023	*Bury cable and install main line*
May, 2023 - Feb, 2024	*Install electronics at customer locations*
June, 2023 - Feb, 2024	*Turn up service*
March, 2024	*Request final payment of Grant Funds*

LA VALLE intends to complete this Project by early 2024. LA VALLE has adequate materials in inventory to meet this timeline as we have gotten ahead of the supply chain issues.

3.2.3. Itemized Budget

a. In addition to the Summary of Project Budget that is included as page 4, applicant should include a price list or quote for any equipment the applicant intends to purchase, including capital expenditures. The application should also indicate whether the facilities involved would be owned, rented or leased.

Table 2: Project Construction Costs:

The Richland County Project provides a summary of the construction cost for the fiber network. All fiber construction will be provided by a third-party contractor. All of the network will be owned by LA VALLE.

DESCRIPTION	***Total Cost***	
Contract/Consultant:		
Engineering	*$100,000*	
Third-Party Construction Crew	*$3,650,000*	*$3,750,000*
Equipment:		
Buried Fiber (applicant provided)	*$1,177,380*	
Vaults/Pedestals/Cabinets (applicant provided)	*$400,000*	
Electronics (applicant provided)	*$200,000*	*$1,777,380*
Misc. Supplies:	*$150,000*	*$150,000*
Labor:		
Intracompany	*$200,000*	*$200,000*
Permitting:	*$5,000*	*$5,000*
TOTAL		***$5,882,380***

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. For purposes of this grant program, subsidy means a contribution to the operating costs, including profit, of the telecommunications provider.

The grant funds requested will not subsidize the expense to provide telecommunications services to end user customers.

The grant funds requested in this Application will only be used to help pay for a portion of the fiber network and electronics used to provide broadband. No grant funds will be used for monthly recurring operating costs for broadband or telecommunications services.

c. The application must show that the grant funds requested will be used for the sole purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in the underserved and unserved areas covered by the application. Construction of broadband infrastructure may include any of the following:
   - Project planning that takes place during the performance period.
   - Obtaining construction permits.
   - Construction of facilities including construction of both "middle mile" and "last mile" infrastructure.
   - Installation and testing of the broadband service.

   See Section 1.4 and Table 2 above for a summary of construction 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 5 of the Application.

   As provided in Section 1.4 the total construction costs for this fiber project is $5,882,380. This does not include the cost of the existing LA VALLE broadband network back to the serving wire center or the existing broadband electronics currently in place to provide broadband service to existing customers. LA VALLE matching funds will be a combination of cash and LA VALLE labor. See page 4 of the Application.

   The grant request in this application is $3,529,430 or 60% of the new construction costs. These funds will be used for third-party contractors burying the fiber and materials needed.

   The balance of the construction project will be paid for by LA VALLE and Richland County.

b. **Public-private partnership.**
   If the public-private partnership is memorialized in a joint venture agreement or other writing, provide a copy of that agreement. If the partnership has not been reduced to a written agreement, provide a short description of the management role, financial commitment, or other contribution to the project for each participating partner.

This Application does propose a public private partnership agreement with Richland County. See Exhibit B.

c. **Existing broadband service.** A list of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve. In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account:

- The degree to which the proposed project avoids duplicating existing broadband infrastructure.
- The application of a wireless broadband service provider proposing significant overlap with existing broadband service in addition to service to an unserved area will not be given priority consideration.
- Provide a list of all landline broadband service providers (DSL, cable or fiber to the home) and fixed wireless broadband service providers that overlap the footprint of the proposed broadband project.
- If known, provide an estimate of the customers within the proposed footprint that are underserved by competing landline and fixed wireless broadband service providers, and the download/upload speeds offered by those competing service providers.
- Provide a list of mobile wireless broadband service providers that overlap the footprint of the proposed project.
- If known, provide an estimate of the customers within the proposed footprint that are underserved by competing mobile wireless broadband service providers, and the download/upload speeds offered by those competing service providers. (The presence of existing mobile wireless providers does not contribute to or affect the evaluation of existing broadband service in the project area for purposes of priority consideration, but provides a more complete picture of the broadband options available to residents.)

Because of the very rural area of the County and the rough wooded areas no other broadband provider will build a network in the area of this Project. If and when Frontier Communications deploys broadband service to this area it is not expected to meet the broadband speeds of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up.

See Section 3.2.2.a and Table 1 for a summary of wireline and fixed wireless broadband service providers in the Project area.

There are no other landline or fixed wireless providers providing broadband service at the required levels that overlap the Project area.

According to the PSCW Wisconsin Broadband Map there is currently one (1) mobile wireless carrier providing service in this area. No advertised broadband speeds are provided. There are also two (2) satellite providers providing a range of 25 to 35 Mbps of download speed. The number of customers is unknown, and we argue the fact that these speeds are achievable.

d) **Project impact.** A description of the geographic area and the population, both in terms of absolute numbers and likely users, which will be serviced 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.

The Project currently includes 457 resident locations and 3 business locations.

If the Commission awards the grant application to LA VALLE the following broadband expansion will occur:

1) *All 457 resident locations in the Project area will have access to up to 1Gbps/500Mbps of broadband connectivity.*

2) *all 3 business location in the Project area will have access to up to 1 Gbps/500 Mbps of broadband connectivity.*

   Future homes and businesses as the Project area grows and develops will also be served by this network.

3) *Not only will the LA VALLE fiber route and FTTH Project provide high-speed broadband service to over 460 locations, the following locations will benefit by the availability of the fiber route:*

   - *Will help The Richland Hospital to improve the overall health in the Project area through access to the hospital online resources.*
   - *High-speed broadband will be available to several customers that work from their homes or telecommute to their business location.*
   - *Locations that have security systems will be able to use them with a higher quality of monitoring.*

4) *LA VALLE will work with low-income families to give them an affordable service.*

e) **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 number of users.
- The number of network nodes.
- The number of services provided.
- The geographic area underserved by the project.

This description may also include a discussion of possible growth potential that is outside the commitment the applicant is making as part of its application.

The FTTH Project is Scalable and would provide LA VALLE a pathway to service many more homes in the Project area in the future.

This broadband project will provide a base to expand to housing growth in this area and does connect other LA VALLE areas served with broadband and does provide diverse and redundant fiber routes to provide an even more robust LA VALLE broadband network. This Project will initially serve 460 locations, but will also provide the fiber backbone to serve additional locations in the Project area.

If LA VALLE is awarded a Broadband Expansion Grant for this Project LA VALLE will commit to applying for a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant in the next round of applications for other underserved and unserved areas in Richland County.

The fiber network for this Project, which is included in this area, will be the fiber backbone for the future economic development in Richland County.

f) **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. This description may be supplemented with a letter from one or more persons discussing the potential economic impact the project could have for that individual or business.

In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account:

- A discussion of potential economic impact the project could have for an individual business located in the project area.
- An explanation of how an improved download and upload transmission speed could better support a specific business in the project area.
- An explanation of the likely impact improved broadband service could have on residential property values, supported by local sales data if available.
- A demonstration of how improved broadband service to a residential portion of the project could benefit a telecommuting population.
- A demonstration of how the speeds and service being offered by the project fits with current and future economic needs of the community and local businesses.

High speed broadband service is an essential element for economic development in any rural community. A FTTH broadband network with 1 Gbps service available throughout the Project Area meets the customer needs now and future increased demands. Broadband provides the ability for businesses to add employees and provide on-line training to existing employees for employment retention. High speed broadband also provides residents with access to health care facilities, education facilities and world wide access for on-line purchases of services and products. Also telecommuting provides an opportunity for residents to save on travel costs and drive time to a work location.

See Exhibit A Letters of Support for specific examples of how broadband service supports economic development in a community.

g) **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 broadband service provider to extend broadband service to areas adjacent to this Project area. See Section 1.5 – Map #1. LA VALLE plans to offer broadband service to all locations in the area.

However, if the Commission is aware of any adjacent areas that CenturyLink is not providing broadband service, LA VALLE would be very interested in working

with the Commission Wisconsin Broadband office to expand the LA VALLE fiber network to those areas.

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.
   - If applicable, an applicant must comment upon the status of all prior broadband expansion grant projects, including the type of broadband technology used, the facility route actually built or installed, the number of residential and business customers actually connected, and other relevant details of the prior project(s).
   - An applicant may also comment on broadband construction projects undertaken in prior years that were not funded in part by the Broadband Expansion Grant program.

   See the Executive Summary and Table 3.

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

   There are no providers in the Project area that can provide 25Mbps broadband access.

   LA VALLE will provide broadband speeds of up to 1 Gbps to requesting locations.

c. A description of an applicant's financial ability to undertake the proposed broadband construction project. This may include information such as the number of years the company has been in operation, documentation of successful completion of similar infrastructure projects, evidence that sufficient funds are available to cover project expenditure and match, customer turn-over rates and credit rating.

   LA VALLE has been providing broadband service since 1996. LA VALLE has the experienced staff and finances to undertake this Project. See the Executive Summary for broadband projects successfully completed by LA VALLE.

d. 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.
   - Specific information from a hospital or clinic in the project area that currently uses or intends to use home-based telemedicine equipment to enhance access health care service would best illustrate this point.

   All customers that request LA VALLE broadband service will have more than adequate broadband speed available to have access to health care facilities from their home. This broadband service will help reduce health care costs for transportation to medical facilities, office visit charges and provide faster response times. Customers will also be able to take advantage of online health monitoring applications. Such online services include: blood pressure along with blood clot monitoring, oversight of insulin and pain pumps, in home cancer treatments, exercise and diet monitoring, adjustment to pacemakers and other heart monitors and monitoring of diseases. In addition, those Veterans who reside in this rural

area that have far distances to travel to reach a VA facility will be able to subscribe to a high speed service that would provide video conferencing.

e. A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of students to access educational opportunities from home.
   - Specific information on the likely number of students that will benefit from improved access to educational opportunities from home would be useful.
   - Specific information regarding educational programs that are currently available for students in the project area would be useful.

All customers that request LA VALLE broadband services will be pleased to know that all students in the household will have more than adequate broadband speeds for all homework assignments, research and access to all educational opportunities on the web. Students are assigned a computer for class and homework. Students in the Project area will now have high speed Broadband available at their homes to be able to use the computer for school projects, assignments and homework.

Also, online undergraduate and graduate education programs will be available to all households. All available at very reasonable pricing as provided in the Executive Summary.

f. A description of actions taken by a city, village, town, or county in support of the grant application, including that have not been discussed in the context of a public-private partnership above, but not limited to:
   - The contribution of funds, easements or permissions to use publicly-owned real estate, construction materials, or other items of value to the grant project.
   - The contribution of in-kind assistance to the grant project in the form of waived fees and expenses for obtaining use permits and permissions.
   - The contribution of other items of benefit to the grant project, such as public outreach and education, vehicles, water, etc.
   - Certification as a Broadband Forward Community or Telecommuter Forward Community.

See Exhibit B.

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

See Exhibit A.

h. 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:
   1 Technical support and training materials that the applicant intends to provide.
      LA VALLE subscribes to the Calix Support Cloud to ensure customers with a trouble free network by remote management. This enables staff to quickly manage devices and troubleshoot subscriber issues. Additionally, support and installation teams have greater access to a holistic view of the subscriber experience, enabling them to focus on subscriber upsell

opportunities, such as upgrading service tiers or promoting managed Wi-Fi services based on customer data and preferences.

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

LA VALLE contacts all new locations in a new project area and provides information on the fiber network, time frame of the project, broadband service packages and pricing that will be available and assist with any questions related to the project.

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

LA VALLE provides various programs and outreach to provide assistance to individuals of low income, including the following:

- *As an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier LA VALLE provides discounts to resident customers for broadband service in accordance with Section PSC 160.062 Lifeline Program of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and FCC regulations for Lifeline support.*
- *LA VALLE also works directly with all local school districts to identify students that are not connected to a broadband service and determine if LA VALLE has facilities at that students home location.*

LA VALLE's plan is to continue to build FTTH networks in underserved and unserved areas using grants and LA VALLE funding to help accomplish the Wisconsin Broadband Plan-2019.

LA VALLE will provide the Commission additional information needed to approve this Application.

LA VALLE staff will work with the Commission staff to provide maps of this Project in an electronic format.

i. Secondary benefits of this project include.

- *Telecommuting. LA VALLE is planning to promote this area as a Telecommuting focused area. Promoting that both resident and business can work from their home to business locations in Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota.*

- *Tourism:*

1) The local business, resident and tourist areas need broadband service to connect to the world. Without broadband service the Project area population will continue to decline, and tourists will go to other parts of the United States to spend their vacation dollars.

2) This Project area in South Western Wisconsin is in a prime outdoor recreation area with hundreds of tourists in the area every week. In summer tourists visit the area for fishing in the numerous trout streams in the area, hiking and bicycling on the area trails and canoeing the rivers and streams. There are many AirBnB vacation units on the scenic hilltops and valleys that will realize increased occupancy with high speed broadband service available. The rural

roads in Southwest Wisconsin are also one of the top 10 destinations for motorcycling. Winter month activities include snow shoeing, snowmobiling and fishing. The beautiful driftless area attracts tourists from all over the United States.

TABLE 3
LA VALLE TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE, INC.
FY 2022 BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION
HISTORY OF LA VALLE TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE, INC.

LA VALLE Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (LA VALLE) has been a proud community member for 65 years serving the most rural areas of Central Wisconsin. Originally organized in August 1956 to provide telephone service to our rural areas, LA VALLE now serves over 2000 members with Telephone, Broadband and IPTV services.

In 2019 LA VALLE completed a FTTH network to 100% of the locations in its ILEC service territory.

Rural telephone cooperatives were formed when the cost of expanding services to rural areas discouraged for-profit utilities from serving these areas. As a result, the cooperative model was often used to provide telephone services to rural communities. Today, telephone cooperatives serve about 5 percent of the U.S. population, but their service area covers more than 40 percent of the country's land mass. Cooperatives have stood the test of time and remain an innovative and integral economic force.

Cooperatives are owned by their members – the people who use the cooperative's products and services – and are driven by service rather than profit. Cooperatives allow ordinary people to join together to gain economic power and to improve their lives and their communities while helping people meet their technology needs with innovative and practical solutions. We actively seek opportunities to get involved in the communities we serve.

At LA VALLE Telephone Cooperative our goal is to anticipate and exceed our customer's expectations by providing highly valued communications and information services while continuing our tradition of exceptional service and support. We strive to improve the quality of life by developing lasting relationships with our members, customers and employees while maintaining the financial well-being of the Cooperative.

TABLE 4
LA VALLE TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE, INC.
FY 2022 BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION
SUMMARY OF BROADBAND SERVICE ADJACENT AREAS

LA VALLE Telephone Cooperative, Inc. ("RICHLAND-COUNTY") is working to build a contiguous FTTH network in Crawford County. RGTC designs their fiber network projects to cover all locations in a project area and not leave locations in an adjacent area without a broadband service provider.

The following map shows below the existing fiber network and the proposed FY 2022 Broadband Expansion Grant applications are designed to cover all locations.

1) The areas in light blue with dark blue lines is the proposed Project area for this grant application.
2) The areas in green and yellow are areas that have been awarded to LA VALLE in prior grant rounds and RDOF.

3) The area in white is LA VALLE Telephone Cooperative's ILEC area providing fiber services to 100% of its members.
4) The area in dark blue is Richland-Grant Telephone Cooperative's award areas and is a direct partner with LA VALLE.
5) The pink area is Tech Com, Inc's award area which LA VALLE is a 50% owner.
6) The area immediately South is serviced by Frontier Communications with aged copper infrastructure not able to provide adequate broadband.

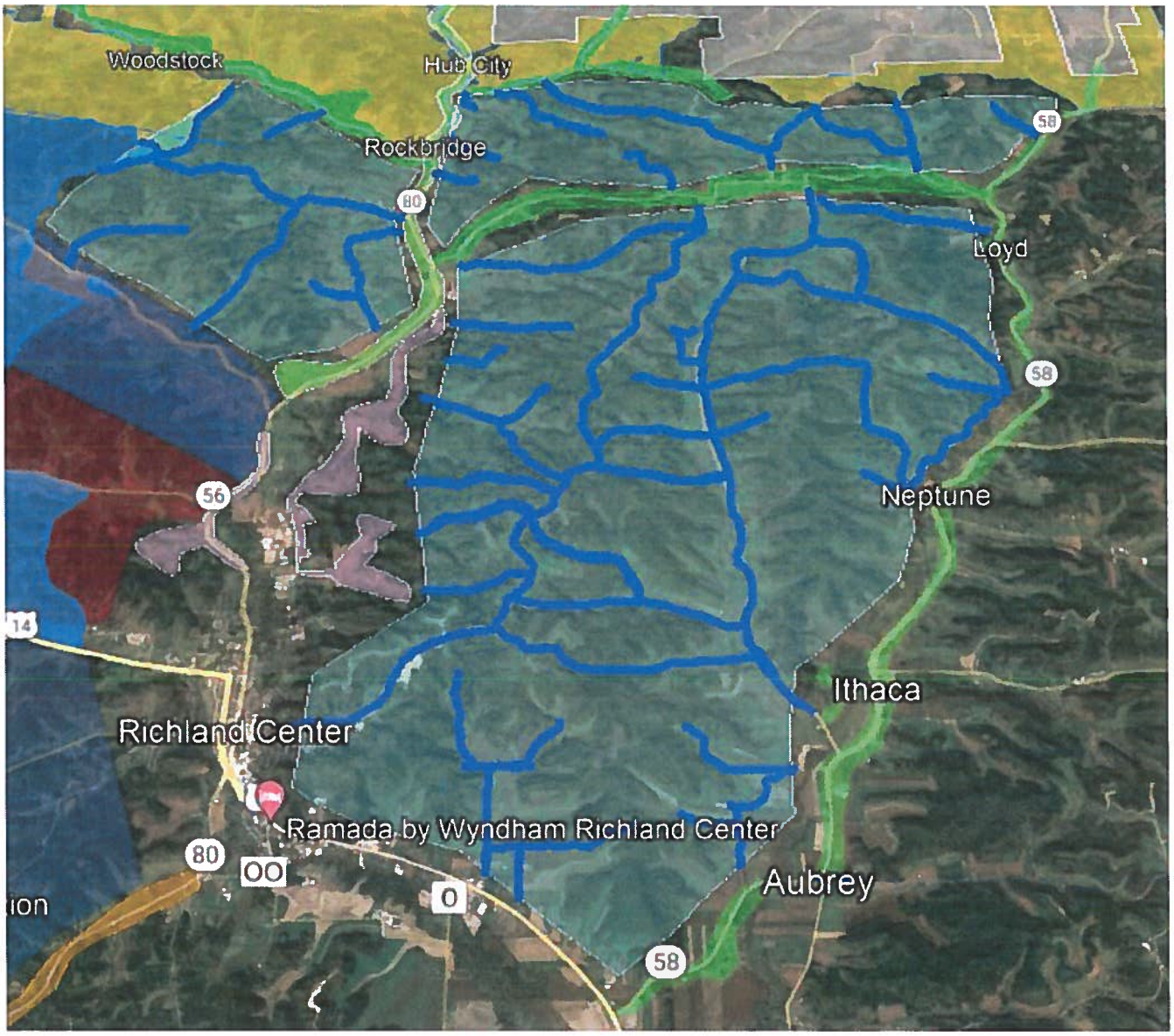
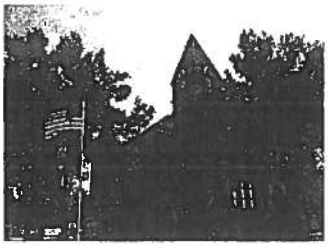


EXHIBIT A
LETTERS OF SUPPORT



Richland County Administrator's Office

Clinton Langreck, Administrator
181 W Seminary St, PO Box 310
Richland Center, WI 53581-0310
Phone: (608)649-5960 FAX: (608)647-6134
Email: clinton.langreck@co.richland.wi.us

16-Mar-22

To: Wisconsin PSC

Subject: Richland County Letter of Support

We are writing this letter on behalf of Richland County in support of La Valle Telephone Cooperative's application to provide fiber broadband access to residents in Richland County. This is an area in desperate need of access to a fast and reliable broadband service as we currently do not have a provider that can do so in the proposed project area.

Broadband is crucial to the economic stability and viability of this area now and in the future. La Valle has already invested substantial amounts in Richland County to bring broadband coverage to unserved areas. This grant will bring them one step closer to their ultimate goal of providing fiber broadband access to 100% of the County. Richland County whole-heartedly stands behind this project and hopes the commission sees the value both parties bring to this proposed project.

Sincerely,
Clinton Langreck
County Administrator

March 9, 2022

Wisconsin Broadband Office
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
Hill Farms State Office Building
North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

To Whom it May Concern,

We at Prosperity Southwest Wisconsin Regional Economic Development Corporation, would like to voice our strong support for the expansion of broadband across Richland County in southwest Wisconsin. Access to broadband is seen as essential to the growth and diversification of our economy. It has become increasingly difficult for our businesses, entrepreneurs and schools to compete with the limited access to high-speed internet in the area.

With Covid, the issues surrounding broadband have only become more apparent. Our school districts, when classes were held virtually, had many students who did not have access to reliable internet to attend class. This poses tremendous obstacles to their education. We hope that soon, every household and student within Richland County will have access to affordable, reliable, high speed internet as a tool for success in their current schooling, and their futures.

We no longer can have our essential services; healthcare, education and public services limited due to our situation with broadband access. We have seen a unification of our local resources through these efforts to promote the expansion of broadband.

For all these reasons, we support the LaValle Telephone PSC application to serve areas of Richland County.

Sincerely,

Abby Haas
President
Prosperity Southwest Wisconsin

RICHLAND
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
450 South Main Street
Richland Center, WI 53581
Office # 608-649-596

Date: 3/11/2022

RE: LaValle Telephone Cooperative – Richland County Broadband Expansion

This letter is being written in support of LaValle Telephone Cooperative's application for the Broadband Expansion Grant for broadband expansion in Richland County. Richland County and its communities have identified broadband service as one of the most important elements for the development, strengthening, and success of our county.

The areas to the North, Northeast, and East of Richland Center around communities such as Richland Center, Ithaca, Neptune, Loyd, Hub City, Rockbridge, Woodstock, Gillingham and Boaz would be greatly enhanced by the installation of broadband. It would allow for more efficient delivery of education and information that is critical to strengthening out county and would allow for greater opportunities in the area of remote business functions.

We thank you in advance for your willingness to financially partner with the LaValle Telephone Cooperative and our region by awarding grant monies to help make broadband available to our communities.

Sincerely,

Jasen Glasbrenner

Richland Economic Development Director

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–PLATTEVILLE
RICHLAND

March 13, 2022

Paul & Angela Coenen
Hurricane Kennels
Coenen Construction
17502 Schaefer Lane
Richland Center, WI 53581

To Whom It May Concern,

The purpose of this letter is to request grant approval to receive High-Speed Internet service through Lavalle Telephone Cooperative at our facility on Schaefer Lane in the town of Rockbridge in Richland County. We also identify the need for our neighbors on Schaefer Lane as well.

As two professionals working for the public school system and the University of Wisconsin System, our internet needs have increased dramatically over the past three years. As an educator for the La Crosse School District, I have had to conduct classes virtually throughout the last couple of years and still conduct parent-teacher conferences virtually to date. With unreliable internet service, I have had to travel to La Crosse to teach classes and seminars when I could have been at home conducting class and/or conferences.

Additionally, I have a small business, Coenen Construction, which is my summer-based business and future full-time employment. I rely heavily on the internet for exposure and communication with customers and potential customers. While cell phones have become a way of life, their cost without fiber internet becomes quite costly.

As a University of Wisconsin System employee, Angie can work from home often but cannot at times due to poor internet service. She will have to leave and drive to her university office to conduct meetings. She is also an executive board member for two non-profit organizations where all sessions are conducted virtually at night or on weekends. Without fiber-based internet, she has to drive to her office to engage in these meetings where she donates her time and efforts.

We also run Hurricane Kennels, raising and training high-quality German Shorthaired Pointers. This endeavor requires us to monitor the security and safety of our facility, dogs, and puppies when we have them. It has been frustrating and worrisome when we are checking on our facility and puppies only to find we have no connection due to poor service on the camera end in our buildings.

In our current state of economics, these issues have become financial hardship. We question how long we will be able to continue living in a rural area surrounded by fiber internet and consider relocating to an area with reliable fiber service.

Several neighbors have also asked that we speak on their behalf, encouraging the installation of high-speed fiber service. Their needs range most notably from our immediate neighbor, John Barreau, and his family. John has two school-age sons that attend school in the Richland Center District. Their internet needs are significant with virtual classes, projects, and other homework that require them to use the internet. Because they have no reliable source for the internet, they cannot do their required work at times and fall behind in their education. Their need is substantial, and fiber service would remedy that need. In addition to those boys, John also has an adult step-son, Ryan Zoellick, that lives with them and works virtually. He has to seek other internet sources to perform the duties of his job. Fiber service would also solve that issue as well.

As you can see, with internet demanding professions, educational requirements for school-age children, and young people trying to make a living in this technological world, we find it very difficult to grow economically, let alone thrive, in education, in our careers, small businesses, and non-profit volunteer work. Please consider our request for fiber and help us learn, develop, and prosper.

Sincerely,
Paul and Angie Coenen Angie & Paul Coenen
The John Barreau and Therese Zoellick Family
Ryan Zoellick
Mark Bray

BROADBAND ACCESS GRANT APPLICATION
PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

This Public Private Partnership Agreement ("Agreement") is made by and between -Richland County, a Wisconsin municipal corporation (the "County") and La Valle Telephone Cooperative Wisconsin corporation ("La Valle"). The County and La Valle are individually referred to as "Party" and collectively referred to as "Parties".

WHEREAS, the County seeks to help provide access to broadband services in unserved and/or underserved areas and to encourage economic development within its boundaries; and

WHEREAS, La Valle proposes to construct broadband infrastructure to reach certain unserved and/or underserved resident and business locations requesting broadband service in the County where such service is currently unavailable or is prohibitively expensive; and

WHEREAS, La Valle is applying for a Fiscal Year 2022 Broadband Expansion Grant ("Grant") to build Fiber-To-The Home ("FTTH") in a hard-to-serve area in the County. The project area includes a fiber optic network serving approximately 460 locations in the unserved/underserved areas outlined in Exhibit A. ("the Project"); and

WHEREAS, the County is a political subdivision of the State of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the County desires to enter into this Agreement to work with La Valle to secure funding through application(s) to public grant and loan programs intending to construct broadband Infrastructure or through alignment of other appropriate external funding sources for economic development to support the Project; and

WHEREAS, at the March 15, 2022 County Board meeting, the Board voted to proceed with La Valle and the proposed joint broadband Project between the County and La Valle, and to contribute an amount of $ 590,000 to extend fiber into the Project area upon the award of a Public Service Commission of Wisconsin ("Commission") Grant; and

WHEREAS, the County will assist in public education, outreach, and mutually agreed upon operations in support of successful Project outcomes. The County shall also provide in-kind assistance to the Project in the form of waived fees for permitting, zoning, rights of way, and easements necessary for the Project; and

WHEREAS, enhanced broadband access and availability will be utilized to position the County for desirable economic growth through addressing existing service disparities, while providing a means for accessing the advantages of technology-based economic development practice for the subject localities.

WHEREAS, La Valle Telephone Cooperative (LTC) is committed to providing fiber connection, connectivity and tower space, in support of Richland County Emergency Radio Infrastructure, when such infrastructure is located in the vicinity of LTC's fiber network for existing LTC towers; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, the Parties agree as follows:

1. Purpose. The Parties, agree to cooperate and exercise their powers jointly for the purpose of providing support and/or revenues for the Project – Exhibit A includes a map showing the Project area where La Valle fiber facilities are to be installed. The Project will extend La Valle's existing broadband network with a Fiber-to-the-Home ("FTTH") network to existing resident and business locations in the Project area. The FTTH network will also be available a for all future businesses and residences that will be located in the Project area.

2. Authorization. Each Party shall authorize the execution, delivery and performance of this Agreement.

3. Project Funding. La Valle intends to request a Commission Grant. The County has agreed to provide a contribution of $ 590,000 to the cost of the Project, to be paid as provided in section 4 below. La Valle, directly and through other sources, will provide the balance of the funding for the Project. If the Grant is awarded, La Valle may accept the Grant and enter into an acceptable Commission Broadband Grant agreement or, in La Valle's sole discretion, may decline the Grant and not enter into a Grant agreement. The County's contribution shall only be payable if the Grant is accepted.

4. Payment to La Valle. The County shall pay the amount of $ 590,000 as follows:

Start of fiber construction	$ $295,000
Final Project Status Report submitted to Commission	$ $295,000

5. Project Ownership. La Valle shall have sole ownership of the Project and shall be solely responsible for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project.

6. Liability. La Valle shall have sole liability for the Project and any and all claims, obligations, liability, costs, demands, damages, expenses, fines, penalties, or causes of action ("Claims") that may arise from the Project and its construction, operation, or maintenance. Each Party and its successors and assigns shall indemnify and hold the other Party and its officials, employees, and agents harmless from any and all Claims, including the costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees, which may arise out of the ownership, construction, maintenance, or operation of the Project regardless of any fault on the part of the Party, its officials, employees, or agents.

7. Records. La Valle will maintain records related to the Project; and, during the Project, La Valle will make those records available upon reasonable request of the County.

8. Report. Until completion of the Project, La Valle shall meet with the County on a semi-annual basis for the purpose of presenting an oral report on the status of the Project. The date, time and place of such meeting shall be determined cooperatively among the Parties. No less than seven (7) days prior to such meeting La Valle shall provide a written report regarding siting, construction progress with respect to the Project.

9. Effective Date. This Agreement shall become effective upon its execution by both Parties.

10. Termination Date. If the Grant is awarded, this Agreement shall terminate 30 days after County's final payment to La Valle. If the Grant is not awarded, this Agreement shall terminate upon notice from the Commission that the Grant will not be awarded. If the Grant is not awarded, neither Party shall have any obligation to proceed with the Project or make any payment related to the Project. If the Grant is awarded in an amount less than requested in the Grant application, the Parties shall confer and determine the feasibility of proceeding with the Project.

11. Amendments. Any amendments to this Agreement must be in writing and signed by the Parties.

12. Entire Agreement. This Agreement, including its recitals and exhibits constitutes the entire agreement and understanding of the Parties with respect to the subject matter of this Agreement. There are no representations or understandings of any kind not stated in this Agreement.

13. Governing Law. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

14. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts each of which shall be deemed an original but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

RICHLAND COUNTY:

By: _____
Clinton Langreck – Richland County Administrator

Date: 16 Mar 2022

LA VALLE TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE

By: _____
John Bartz – CEO & GM

Date: 3-16-2022

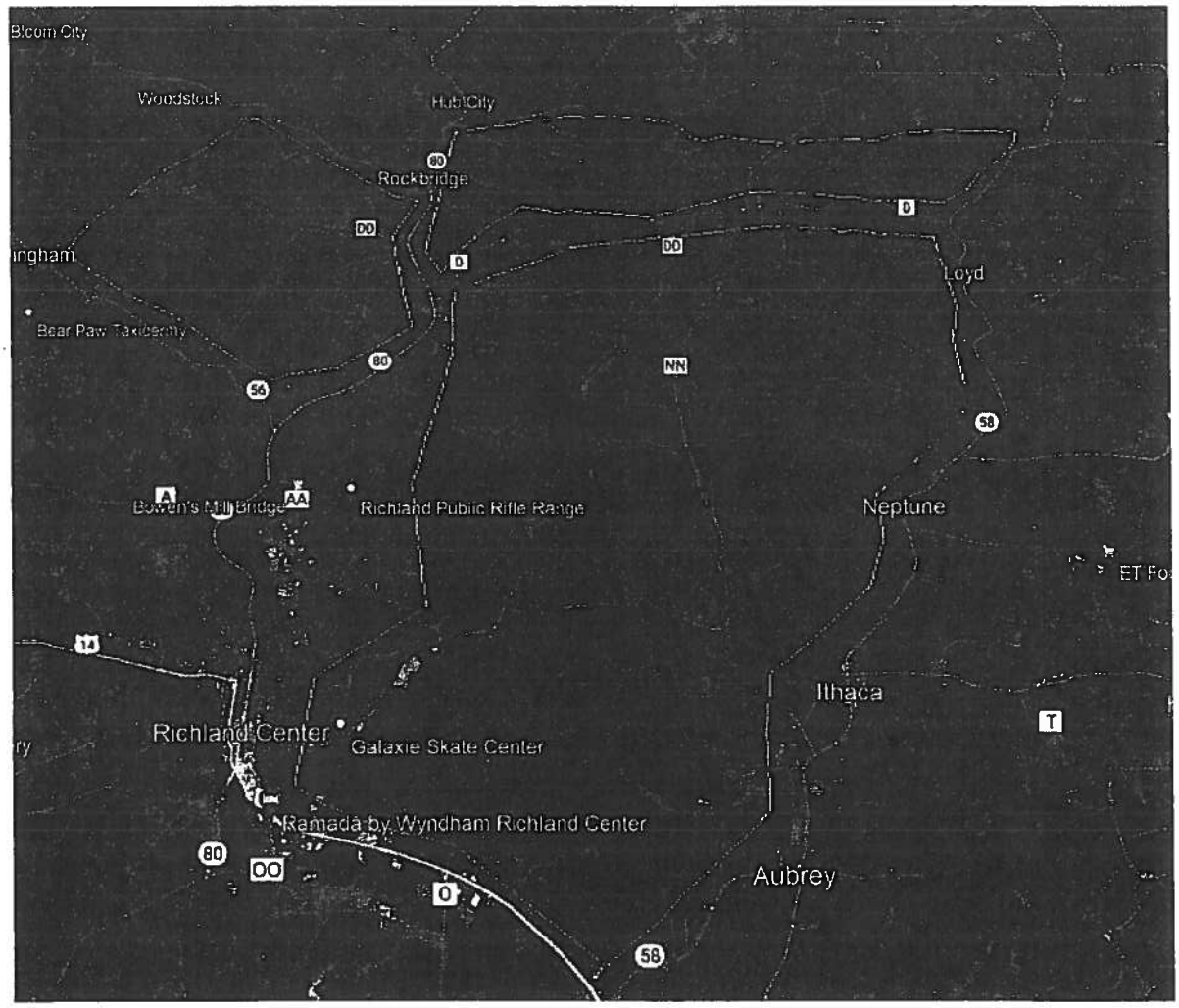



EXHIBIT A