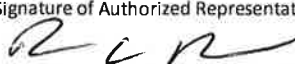


BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION

For Fiscal Year 2022

<p>Primary Applicant (Name and Address):</p> <p>Dennis L. Bachman, CEO Citizens Telephone Cooperative, Inc. dba Citizens Connected 328 West Main Street New Auburn, WI 54727 dbachman@citizens-connected.com (715) 237-2605</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
	<p>Contact for further information: PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov</p>	
	<p>Date: December 1, 2021</p>	
<p>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.</p>		
<p>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.</p>		
<p>Name of Authorized Representative (Type or Print)</p> <p>Dennis L. Bachman</p>	<p>Title</p> <p>CEO</p>	<p>Phone, (715) 237-2605</p>
<p>Signature of Authorized Representative</p> 	<p>Date</p> <p>3-17-2022</p>	

SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

Primary Applicant Name Citizens Telephone Cooperative, Inc. dba Citizens Connected	Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar) \$261,689
Federal Employer Identification No. 39-0944208	Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar) \$261,689
Contact Name and Title Dennis L. Bachman, CEO	Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar) \$523,378
Telephone Number (715) 237-2605	Project Name Chetek East
E-mail Address(es) dbachman@citizens-connected.com	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 Dennis L. Bachman	Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number Dennis L. Bachman
If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations Town of Dovre, 304 25 ½ Street, Chetek, WI 54728, FEIN: 39-6005860 Marshfield Clinic, 1000 North Oak Avenue, Marshfield, WI 54449	
Brief Project Description (2 sentences) To construct FTTH to the rural areas between our Canton and New Auburn Exchanges.	
Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed Up to 1 Gbps	Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed Up to 1 Gbps
Minimum Proposed Download Speed to Customer Location Up to 50 Mbps	Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed to Customer Location Up to 25 Mbps
County or Counties served by this project Portions of Barron and Rusk	Community or Communities served by this project Town of Chetek, Town of Dovre, Town of Rusk, Town of Sumner (Primarily Towns of Dovre & Rusk)
List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve CenturyLink/Lumen	
Does proposed project serve an unserved area of the State, as defined in Section 1.4 of the application instruction? (yes/no)	Is the Applicant certified as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community, or does the grant project

YES	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). 2	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). 65
Of the improved business locations, how many locations are <i>unserved</i> ? 0	Of the improved residential locations, how many are <i>unserved</i> ? 15
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) 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:
Citizens Telephone Cooperative, Inc.	Chetek East

Budget

Line:	Description / Category:	Grant Funds:	Match:	Total:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees	\$ 215,539.00	\$ 215,539.00	\$ 431,078.00
2	Equipment	\$ 45,400.00	\$ 45,400.00	\$ 90,800.00
3	Supplies			\$ -
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)			\$ -
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00	\$ 1,500.00
6	Travel			\$ -
7	Other			\$ -
Total:		\$ 261,689.00	\$ 261,689.00	\$ 523,378.00
50.0% match requested				

Pledged Contributions

#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1	Town of Dovre	Partner	Cash	\$ 30,000.00
2	Marshfield Clinic	Partner	Cash	\$ 10,000.00
3	Citizens Telephone Cooperative, Inc.	Applicant	Cash	\$ 221,689.00
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Total:				\$ 261,689.00

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.

Entity Name: Citizens Telephone Cooperative, Inc. dba Citizens Connected

Identity: Cooperative (Internet Service Provider, also Voice and Video)

Entity Address: 328 West Main Street, New Auburn, WI 54757

Contact Name/Title: Dennis L. Bachman, CEO

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 127, New Auburn, WI 54757

Telephone Number: (715) 237-2605

Email: dbachman@citizens-connected.com

Cash Match Commitment: \$221,689

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

Public Partner: Marshfield Clinic

Contact Name/Title: Christopher Meyer, Director of Virtual Care and Telehealth

Mailing Address: 1000 North Oak Ave, Marshfield, WI 54449

Telephone Number: (715) 221-5816

Email: meyer.christopher@marshfieldclinic.org

[See Exhibit A for Letter of Commitment]

Cash Match Commitment: (Cash, \$ 10,000)

Public Partner: Town of Dovre

FEIN: 39-6005860

Contact Name/Title: Dean Trowbridge, Chairman

Mailing Address: 304 25 ½ Street Chetek, WI 54728

Telephone Number: (715) 237-2530

Email: dovrebarronco@citizens-tel.net

[See Exhibit B & C for Aid to Construction Commitment and Public Private Partnership Agreement]

Cash Match Commitment: (Cash, \$30,000)

- 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).

Citizens Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (Citizens) is certified to provide telecommunications service in Wisconsin pursuant to Section 196.50(2)(b) of the Wisconsin State Statutes, with non-exclusive statewide operating authority. Citizens (PSCW Utility #1130) currently serves the Canton, Long Lake and New Auburn exchanges of Wisconsin and serves almost 1700 Broadband Internet subscribers. **The advanced fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network provides Internet service with speeds up to 1Gbps, as well as Video and Voice services.**

Marshfield Clinic

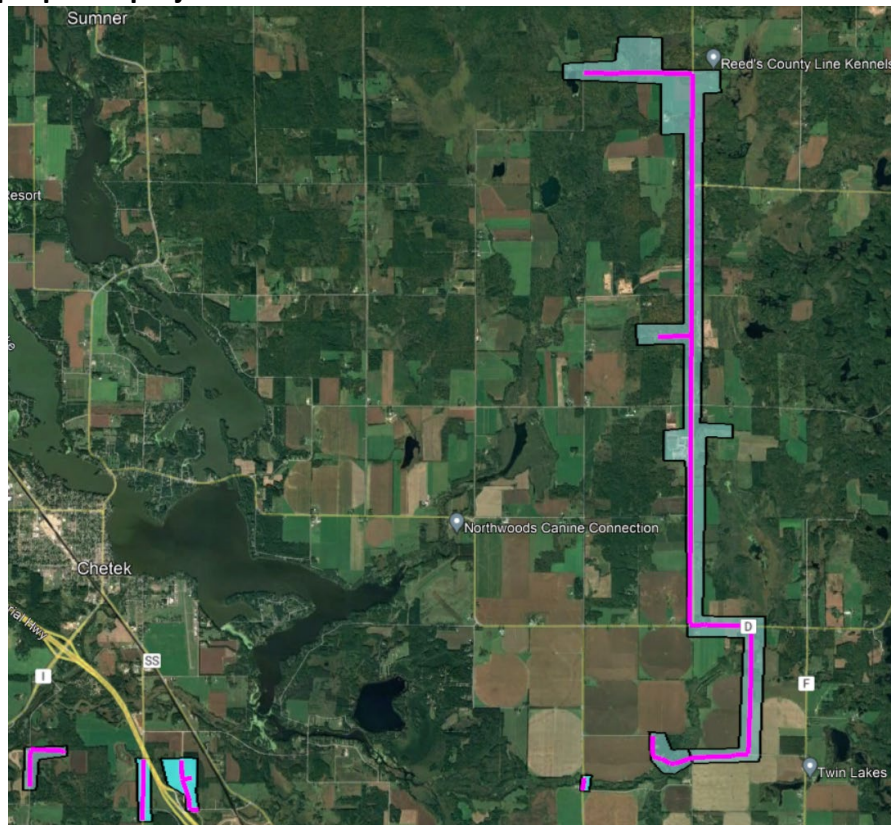
- Letter of Support committing to Cash Contribution (Exhibit A)

The Town of Dovre

- Aid to Construction Commitment (Exhibit B)
- Public Private Partnership Agreement (Exhibit C)

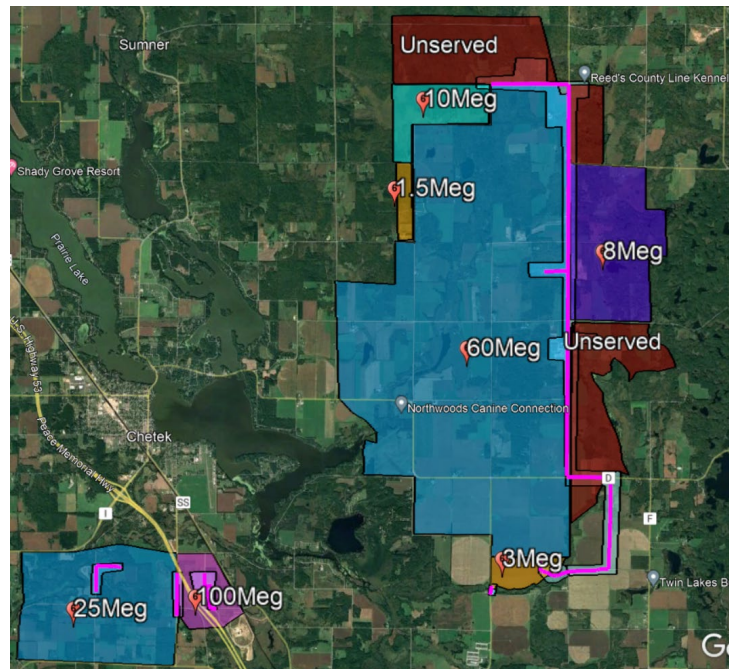
3.2.2 Description of the project

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



Proposed Service Area

- 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.



State Broadband Map

As detailed in this map and the enclosed subscriber info, it is noted that this project largely falls within what is classified as an underserved area. This is primarily due to there being only one service provider in the project area.

In addition, it is Citizens' stance that the service provider speed capabilities as represented in the PSC online mapping system are drastically overstated. This has been demonstrated by potential customer discussions and speed tests completed in the area. See Exhibits L – Q.

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

Include information about the:

- Potential and expected number of households served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.
- Potential and expected number of businesses served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.
- Expected number of seasonal residents and tourists served.
- Estimated download and upload speed of the broadband service packages available for purchase.

This project is designed to bring Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) service to unserved and underserved areas of:

- Towns of Chetek, Dovre and Sumner in Barron County

- Town of Rusk in Rusk County
- (Primarily the Towns of Dovre & Rusk)

Currently no fiber-based broadband is available or planned to reach end user customers. FTTH technology offers faster, more reliable access to higher speeds than aging copper plant. The limit of the speed of FTTH is determined only by the electronics installed. This initiative will be installed with a minimum speed of **50Mbps download, and 25Mbps upload. The system is designed to support 1Gbps** download and upload speeds. In addition to broadband, the system will also deliver high-quality video and traditional phone service, over the same fiber. This service will impact the rural areas located east of Chetek, providing rural residents, family farms, and local businesses with reliable, affordable broadband service.

- Households Served: 65
 - 15 Unserved
 - 50 Underserved
- Businesses Served: 2
 - 0 Unserved
 - 2 Underserved
- Seasonal Residents & Tourists Served: 10 (estimated)
- **Upload Speed: 25Mbps – 250Mbps Download Speed: 50Mbps – 1Gbps**

The incumbent provider does not face any requirement to provide facilities necessary to reach these speeds under the FCC’s recently released CAF Phase II Order and therefore is highly unlikely to do so.

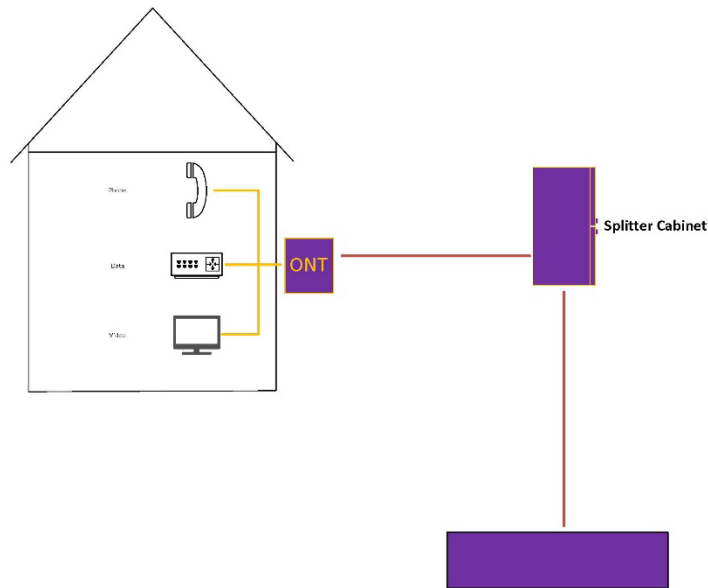
d. A statement whether the proposed project is targeting the “last mile,” “middle mile,” or backbone portion of the broadband infrastructure.

This project includes backbone, last mile, and distribution infrastructure and facilities. It is a complete end-to-end solution. This initiative is an extension of Citizens’ existing fiber network, with dedicated backbone, distribution, feeder and drop fiber to premises in the service area. A primary goal of every expansion of Citizens’ system is to create resiliency and fault tolerance.

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.

This project will continue to implement FTTH using Calix equipment. The “last mile” provides dedicated bandwidth using GPON technology. The “backbone” is continually monitored and managed to ensure customers always have available the connect speeds they subscribe to. At Citizens, we have a long history of

successful installations of this technology, and this is an extension of our existing network. This project does not contain any fixed wireless service.



Upon completion of this build, the design will conform to all applicable federal, state, and local requirements and standard engineering practice. The installed infrastructure will provide the service levels and speed stated in this application.

Pricing in the proposed service area will be as follows (service prices are per mo.):

Description	Internet Only	w/Video	w/Voice	Triple Play
SuperNet (50 Mbps/25 Mbps)	N/A	N/A	\$39.99	\$29.99
TurboNet (100 Mbps/50 Mbps)	\$74.99	\$59.99	\$49.99	\$39.99
XtremeNet (250 Mbps/100 Mbps)	\$104.99	\$89.99	\$79.99	\$69.99
GigaNet (1 Gbps/250 Mbps)	\$154.99	\$129.99	\$119.99	\$99.99

Plans with symmetrical bandwidth, specifically configured for business applications and residential customers with special needs will be available, priced under term contracts.

Full-featured voice service is available at the subscriber's request. Subscribers will not be required to take voice services in the proposed service area. Citizens will also provide video services.

f. For middle mile projects:

- Identify last mile broadband service providers that will connect to the middle mile facility.
 - If the participation of last mile providers is uncertain or cannot be disclosed publicly at the time of the application, describe the providers that could interconnect under appropriate circumstances.
 - How long would it take for last mile connections to result?
- Describe process for use of right-of-way (ROW) in collaboration with others digging or burying facilities (Dig Once program, etc.).

Not Applicable – All facilities will be used for last mile.

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

Due to the unknown availability of materials, the timeline below reflects a 24-month project period, however, the goal is to complete this project in 2023.

Project Plan Activities ("X") equals completion timeline	Project Timeline (in quarters)											
	2022				2023				2024			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Grant Submitted	X											
PSC Grant Announcement and execution of agreement			X									
Bidding					X							
Permitting						X	X					
Directional Drilling										X	X	
Fiber Placement (last mile routes)										X	X	
Fiber Placement (laterals to serve structures)										X	X	
Splicing											X	
General Availability												X

3.2.3 Itemized Budget (all amounts should be rounded to the nearest dollar)

- 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.

Summary of Equipment & Capital Expenditures (all Owned)				
Unit	Description	Labor	Material	TOTAL
BDO	Fiber Pedestal	\$ 25,426.04	\$ 28,449.18	\$ 53,875.22
BFO	Fiber Optic Cable	\$ 116,016.24	\$ 62,365.42	\$ 178,381.66
BM60	Directional Drilling	\$ 34,112.00	\$ 3,448.80	\$ 37,560.80
Splicing	Single & Mass Fusion	\$ 27,048.00	\$ 1,163.10	\$ 28,211.10
SEB	Drop Fiber, Riser, Grounding	\$ 102,459.00	\$ 14,891.18	\$ 117,350.18
Fiber Node	Fiber Node	\$ 7,775.00	\$ 60,155.00	\$ 67,930.00
Permitting	Permit (State and County)	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ 1,500.00
ONT	ONT Enclosure, Electronics	\$ 2,435.00	\$ 20,435.00	\$ 22,870.00
Planning	Design Plan	\$ 15,700.00	\$ -	\$ 15,700.00
			GRAND TOTAL	\$ 523,378.96

- 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, subsidize means a contribution to the operating costs, including profit, of the telecommunications provider.

Citizens' accounting records will demonstrate that all grant funds requested in this application will not have been used to subsidize the expenses of a telecommunications provider or the monthly bills of telecommunications customers.

- 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. 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.

Citizens' accounting records will demonstrate that all grant funds requested in this Application have been used for the sole purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in the unserved and underserved areas addressed in this

Application. **Citizens' self-funded contributions to this project's costs are approximately 42% of the planned 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 4 of the application.*
- 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.).
 - Matching funds contributions must be a firm commitment of funding to the project. Contributions that vary based on the amount of actual sales, customer contributions, or other criteria will not be given weight.

The following entities will provide matching funds. See Exhibits A-C

- Town of Dovre - \$30,000
- Marshfield Clinic - \$10,000

- b. **Public-private partnerships.** 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.
- In scoring this element, information regarding active engagement of diverse communities in the planning, permitting, or marketing of the project will be given weight as well.

See Exhibits C for the Town of Dovre Public Private Partnership Agreement.

- 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:

Current Broadband Providers

Provider	Technology
CenturyLink/Lumen	DSL
Verizon	Cellular
AT&T	Cellular
United States Cellular Corporation	Cellular

Skycasters	Satellite
HughesNet	Satellite
ViaSat Inc.	Satellite
T-Mobile	Cellular

- **The degree to which the proposed project avoids duplicating existing broadband infrastructure.**

No other provider offers FTTH technology in the proposed service area. As stated previously, the PSC Wisconsin Broadband Map shows the area as Underserved and those speeds presented are drastically overstated. (See Section 3.2.2 b response) Further, we are unaware of any requirement compelling the current wireline provider to construct facilities capable of delivering this service in the next 5 years.

This application includes numerous statements from current residents attesting to the lack of reliable broadband in this service area.

- **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.**

Per the PSC mapping tool, CenturyLink is the only landline service provider in the project area. There are no known fixed wireless providers.

- **If known, provide an estimate of the customers within the proposed footprint that are served by competing landline and fixed wireless broadband service providers, and the download/upload speeds offered by those competing service providers.**

Approximately 67 customers live in the project area. CenturyLink's *advertised* speeds are up to **100Mbps download**. However, when entering addresses that are in the project area, several are shown as not being able to get service or eligible to get speeds up to 10Mbps download and 750Kbps upload. The advertised speeds are far from what is available. Please refer to Exhibit L for letters from people served by CenturyLink in these areas.

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

Verizon, AT&T, United States Cellular Corporation, and T-Mobile are the wireless broadband service providers show to provide coverage in the project area, per the PSC Map Utility.

- If known, provide an estimate of the customers within the proposed footprint that are served 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.)

Please refer to Exhibits H, L, N & O, for comments from residents using mobile wireless broadband service providers.

- For middle mile projects, describe the unserved and underserved areas that the middle mile route will transit. In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account:
 - The number of unserved and underserved service locations that could potentially connect through the proposed middle mile route.
 - The degree to which the middle mile route will reduce the cost of extending fiber to the premises broadband service to business and residential service locations in an unserved or underserved area.
 - The degree to which the proposed middle mile route avoids duplicating existing and planned fiber to the premises broadband infrastructure.

Not Applicable – All facilities will be used for last mile.

- d. **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.

This project primarily lies within the Towns of Dovre and Rusk which combined have an estimated 1315 households, of which this project will have the ability to serve approximately 3% of them. The remaining 22 subscriber locations fall within the towns of Chetek and Sumner.

- 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 served by the project.
- The number of aggregation points in middle mile 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.

With the location of the proposed project in relation to the existing FTTH service providers, there is potential for further growth of this service area. Primarily in the Town of Chetek. The facilities are designed in such a way to accommodate this potential future expansion.

For middle mile projects, describe the spare or unused fiber capacity in the route and any future projects planned to use that capacity in the future. For purposes of the question, planning can mean either specific uses already the subject of contract or serious negotiation, or tentative uses that may or may not actually be contracted for in the future.

Not Applicable – All facilities will be used for last mile.

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.

As noted in the Letters of Support from both the Barron and Rusk County Economic Development groups (Exhibit D & E respectively), Covid-19 has

highlighted the needs for quality broadband services. The following are a few key items noted in the letters:

- Proximity to larger Metro areas provides for new business opportunities which broadband is critical for
- This will help improve tourism, telecommuters
- Increased standard of living

Reference is made to Exhibits L - Q, where many comments are listed from residents and businesses in the project area. Special attention to Exhibit F & G letters from Edina Realty and Real Estate Solutions, noting many will not even consider moving to the area without reliable broadband.

The Town of Dovre strongly believes in the value of FTTH so much so that they have committed to the previously discussed Aid to Construction and Public Private Partnership Agreements, included as Exhibits B & C.

As no other provider is offering FTTH, we see no impact on competing broadband service providers. The aging copper plant simply cannot compete with the speeds available using FTTH technology.

The basic fact is that throughput (connect speeds) of competing technologies is limited; copper plant is limited by distance; wireless providers are limited by distance, capacity, and backhaul limitations; and satellite providers are limited by the amount of foliage as well as nature of the weather. With the additional data caps on wireless and satellite services, customers refuse to tolerate substandard broadband performance.

With reliable broadband services and speeds of up to **1Gbps** it is our hope that additional residents and businesses will locate in this rural area of the county.

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.

The proposed project 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.

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.**

The New Auburn Telephone Company served the Village of New Auburn from the time it was organized on May 6, 1909, until December 22, 1952. On December 17, 1952, members approved the merging of the New Auburn Telephone Company, the Canton Farmers Telephone Company, and portions of the Dovre and Chetek Farmers Telephone Company to create Citizens Telephone Cooperative. On December 22, 1952, the State of Wisconsin approved the articles of incorporation for Citizens Telephone Cooperative. It was formed without capital stock and not-for-profit. Its purpose and business was to furnish, improve, and expand telephone service in the area.

Since its inception, Citizens has been committed to enhancing the quality of life by providing reliable, leading-edge technology and exceptional customer service to ensure the sustainability, adaptability, and growth of the Cooperative and the communities in which we live.

This is for sure evident with their early adoption of FTTH technology. Starting in 2004, Citizens began constructing FTTH in their service areas. In 2011, Citizens completed their major FTTH construction allowing every home in the network eligible to receive FTTH services.

Furthering their commitment to rural broadband, Citizens and Chippewa Valley Satellite, a subsidiary of Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative, formed Ntera, LLC in 2017 to bring broadband to the rural areas of Chippewa County and surrounding counties.

Between Ntera and Citizens, we have been recipients of the following loans and/or grants allowing for broadband expansion:

- 1 USDA RUS Traditional Loan
- 1 USDA RUS Reconnect Loan
- 10 WI PSC Grants

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

All Citizens customers are connected via FTTH, therefore there will be no duplication of broadband infrastructure. Citizens is the only provider offering FTTH and speeds of up to 1Gbps in the proposed project area.

- 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.

With the continued operations of Citizens since 1952 and Ntera since 2017, it is evident that the organizations are capable of a continued commitment to deploying rural broadband. As noted in the previous section, Citizens has completed FTTH deployment to our entire existing service area along with other areas through Ntera, LLC.

Over the last two years, we have increased our broadband subscribers by 14%.

In addition, Citizens 2021 Balance Sheet (see below) details our strong financial ability to continue with further projects.

Citizens Telephone Cooperative	
Balance Sheet	
Year To Date as of Month Ending December 31, 2021	
Total Current Assets	\$7,073,362.15
Total Non-current Assets	\$9,772,428.57
Net Property, Plant, & Equipment	\$6,989,336.41
Total Assets	\$23,835,127.13
Total Current Liabilities	\$561,336.53
Total Long Term Debt	\$203,000.00
Total Deferred Credits	\$882,494.10
Total Stockholder Equity	\$22,188,296.50
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$23,835,127.13

- d. For middle mile projects, state the terms under which the applicant will make its middle mile fiber resource available to last mile providers. Without disclosing project-specific or customer-specific negotiated rates for service or access, state whether access to the middle mile fiber resource will be offered to last mile providers at a rate that is reasonable and common to the industry. Describe any restrictions or limits that may limit the availability or interconnection with the middle mile route.

Not Applicable – All facilities will be used for last mile.

- 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. Describe any commitment or tentative discussion indicating the local government or State agency that might use those fiber strands, and for what purpose. Describe any restrictions or limits that may limit the public use (e.g., a possible use conflicts with an existing program covering the same subject matter).**

Not Applicable – All facilities will be used for last mile.

- 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.**
- **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.**

Citizens' FTTH network brings access to healthcare never before possible in the project area. With fast, reliable FTTH broadband services customers have access to countless new options including Telehealth, Telemedicine, and Telecare.

According to a report compiled by the NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association in March of 2017, the following was stated: "Highly advanced, state-of-the-art telemedicine applications - including some not even yet developed - can only be possible when accessed via a high-speed, reliable broadband network." "This is particularly critical in rural America, where the highest potential benefits from telemedicine - and the greatest challenges to deploying broadband - can be found." "According to the Federal Communications Commission, roughly 40 percent of rural Americans still lack access to broadband Internet."

Residents within our proposed project area are among the 40% lacking access to adequate broadband services.

The FTTH broadband would mean residents could stay in their homes longer, as their vitals can be monitored via the broadband connection. Patients could consult with medical professionals via video conference, often eliminating the need for travel to a faraway clinic.

By making broadband a reality in this area we will open the doors for countless new healthcare options!

In a recent article from The Mayo Clinic...

<https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/mayo-clinic-expands-emergency-telemedicine-practice/>) the author, Carol Berteotti, states: "This type of care relies on the expertise of medical, surgical and allied health staff, *as well as reliable, fast*

and secure technology.” This project will provide the “fast and secure technology” noted in the article.

A Letter of Support is included in Exhibit H from Ed and Jessica Pisarcik. Both are Physicians Assistants and have attempted to work from home. They state “We have found it nearly impossible to work from home because our current internet service through our Verizon 5G cell phones as hot spots is woefully inadequate. We use the 15 GB/phone by the middle of the month, before the service speed is reduced to 600 Kbps until the next billing cycle starts. The lack of access to high-speed internet was even more noticeable during the initial months of the Covid pandemic when we were tasked with telecommunicating with our patient's instead of face-to-face visits in the office.”

g. 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.**

Distance learning is prevalent in every level of education, from grade school through college. With the introduction of reliable broadband at speeds of at least 50Mbps/25Mbps as offered by Citizens, students can have instant access to an educational institution's on-line curriculum, including live streaming of classes.

A Reference Letter from Chetek-Weyerhaeuser School District is included in Exhibit I.

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 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.**

The Town of Dovre has committed to a \$30,000 contribution as aid to construction.

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

See Exhibits J - Q for Letters of support

- 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:**
- **Technical support and training materials that the applicant intends to provide.**
 - **Information that the applicant intends to use to promote better broadband adoption and use.**
 - **A description of a program or outreach to provide assistance to individuals of low income.**

With Citizens Corporate Office located in New Auburn, our staff is available to assist our customers in-person with any questions or concerns they may have. Local technical support is also available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. If customers experience issues with their services, it will be responded to within the same business day.

Information on topics including internet usage, troubleshooting tips, and trends are made available to customers through multiple methods including social media, direct mailers, and email.

Citizens provides Lifeline Assistance for qualified, low-income households. This program reduces their landline or broadband internet rates.



**Marshfield Clinic
Health System**

Marshfield Medical Center
1000 North Oak Avenue
Marshfield, WI 54449

March 10, 2022

Ms. Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53707-9100

Re: Letter of Support for the East Chetek FTTH Broadband Expansion Grant proposal by Citizens Connected Telephone Cooperative

Marshfield Clinic is an integrated health system located in Marshfield, WI serving central, north-central and north-western Wisconsin, this includes patients who reside in Barron and Rusk Counties. We are a Mission, Vision and Value's driven organization that strives to "Enrich the Lives of those we serve". MCHS has used Telehealth to reach unserved and underserved populations throughout Wisconsin since 1997.

MCHS is supportive of the efforts of this proposed project by Citizen's Connected Telephone Company and offer this letter of support and commitment for their grant application. This project will expand internet access to about 289 homes and businesses. Marshfield will contribute \$10,000 toward this project, should it be funded by the Public Service Commission. This payment will be payable to Citizens Telephone Cooperative.

Over the course of the last 6 years, MCHS has worked closely with the communities we serve in an effort to help them prepare for a time in which more healthcare can be delivered using technology directly into the patient's home. The COVID-19 Pandemic accelerated the move to delivering care via telehealth much more quickly than expected. However, Telehealth was able to respond quickly and offer continued access to healthcare services by our patients throughout the Pandemic. Since March of 2020, MCHS has completed over 400,000 telehealth encounters that were not permissible prior to the Pandemic. Despite the rapid advancement of Telehealth, access to broadband internet services continue to be our patient's top barrier in accessing these services.

Looking forward to a Post-COVID world, Telehealth is not going away. Federal legislation is expected to make these new flexibilities to use telehealth permanent. Telehealth visits allow patients better access to healthcare without the need to travel or miss work or school. This allows patients to more conveniently maintain their chronic illness appointments, have a visit with their Primary Care Doctor or complete needed follow-up care. A number of new services are likely to join the array of telehealth services already offered by health systems across the country. A patient's access to broadband at home will be a determining factor in which services they can consume and which they cannot. MCHS will be at the forefront of offering these new care modalities.

Collaborative efforts are needed to expand broadband across Wisconsin and MCHS is proud to support this Broadband expansion project and we urge the Public Service Commission to fund this project.

Sincerely,

Susan Turney MD, MS, FACP, FACMPE
CEO

Chetek East Exhibit B

Date 3/8/2022

Kristy Nieto, Broadband Grant
Administrator Division Administrator
Division of Digital Access, Consumer & Environmental Affairs
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards
Way North Tower – 6th Floor
Madison, WI 53705-9100

Re: Aid to Construction – Matching Funds Citizens Connected Grant Application

Ms. Nieto:

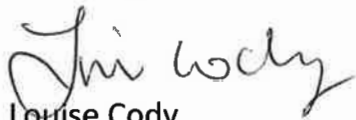
The Town of Dovre will commit \$30,000 to the Citizens Connected fiber project in the Town of Dovre as Aid to Construction.

The Town of Dovre is enthusiastically supporting this grant application and contributing money toward the construction. Strategically, this grant will enable the Town of Dovre to provide high-speed connectivity to 100% of its residents. Our underserved residents in this area deserve access to the same connectivity that their urban neighbors enjoy.

Our values of providing excellent customer service align with Citizens Connected's Cooperative principles. Together we can improve the lives of the citizens of this area as well as continue to attract new residents and economic development to the area.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,



Louise Cody

Clerk, Town of Dovre

Public Private Partnership Agreement

By and between the Town of Dovre, Wisconsin, and Citizens Telephone Cooperative, Inc. dba Citizens Connected.

THIS AGREEMENT is made the 11th day of March, 2022 by and among the Participating Parties (defined below) located in the State of Wisconsin (the "State") which, through their duly authorized representatives, have signed this agreement.

WHEREAS, the Town of Dovre, 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, Citizens Connected, a Wisconsin Cooperative, doing business in the Township, proposes to expand broadband capability to reach un-served and/or underserved residences and businesses in the Town of Dovre where such service is currently unavailable or is prohibitively expensive; and

WHEREAS, it is currently expected that the proposed broadband expansion would be constructed in areas within the Town of Dovre, Barron County, Wisconsin and enhanced broadband access and availability will be utilized to position the Town of Dovre for desirable economic growth through addressing existing service disparities; and

WHEREAS, Citizens Connected has applied for a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant through the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to expand access to broadband services in the Town of Dovre; and

WHEREAS, to further support its application for a Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant, Citizens Connected has requested that the Town of Dovre enter into an Agreement, referred to as a Public Private Partnership Agreement, to assist in the Project by:

- Providing in-kind assistance to the Project in the form of waiving fees and expenses for obtaining permits or permissions required from the Town Board;
- Grant permission on and across Township property, to engage in activities to construct the Project in compliance with all existing rules and regulations;
- Recognizing that the Project is a priority and is consistent with any internal planning documents adapted by the Town of Dovre Town Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby agreed by and among the Parties as follows:

1. **Records.** The Town of Dovre Town Board will maintain and be the custodian of all records associated with the administering and performance of this Agreement, and will make those records available upon request.
2. **Reporting.** Citizens Connected shall provide a report regarding siting and construction progress with respect to the Project.
3. **Effective Date.** This agreement shall become effective upon its adoption and shall remain in full force and effect until terminated as provided herein.
4. **New Members.** After the effective date of this Agreement, additional municipalities may join this Agreement.
5. **Termination.** This Agreement shall be deemed terminated by any party upon thirty (30) days written notice requesting termination of this Agreement in Whole or in part.
6. **Severability.** The terms of this Agreement are severable and any determination by any court or agency having jurisdiction over the subject matter of the Agreement that results in the invalidity of any part shall not affect the remainder of the Agreement.
7. **Amendments.** The terms of this Agreement shall not be amended without the written authorization of the governing bodies of all Participating Parties.
8. **Governing Law.** This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Wisconsin.
9. **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.

TOWN OF DOVRE, BARRON COUNTY, WISCONSIN, a Participating Party

By: _____

Dean Trowbridge, Chairman

Date: 3-11-2022

CITIZENS CONNECTED, a Participating Party

By: _____

Dennis Bachman, CEO

Date: 3-11-2022



Barron County Economic
Development Corporation



335 East Monroe Ave
Barron, WI 54812
715-637-6871

Date: February 21, 2022

Chairperson Rebecca Valcq
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Chairperson Valcq,

I am pleased to support the Citizen's Connected broadband expansion grant application to provide broadband service to underserved of the Towns of Dovre and Chetek in Barron County. As Executive Director of Barron County Economic Development we have residents who work or go to school in these areas so I appreciate Citizens commitment to expand broadband service to an underserved portion of the county. Broadband is important for both residents and businesses, and Citizen's proposal provides opportunities to all these groups. As seen in the past two years, opportunities like these are crucial, especially in rural areas where traditional opportunities for broadband access typically require significant travel. Enhanced broadband will open up possibilities in an economically challenged area. Once barriers to broadband expansion are removed in these areas there will be great improvement as a destination for increased tourism, startups, expanding and relocating businesses, telecommuters and working families relocating here.

Our area's proximity to Minneapolis-St. Paul, Duluth-Superior, and Eau Claire provides huge potential markets. New business creates skilled workers, increased home values, and increased tax base; new families expand improve our school district's, revitalize our workforce and grow our communities.

The investment by Citizens Connected and the State of Wisconsin through broadband expansion grants will be of significant economic benefit to the residents and businesses of Sawyer County. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at (715) 637-6871 or bcedc@co.barron.wi.us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
David Armstrong
Executive Director

Andy Albarado, Director
311 Miner Ave. Suite C130
Ladysmith, WI 54848

715.532.2257 715.532.2272 (fax)
aalbarado@ruskcountywi.us

Andy Albarado

Administrative Coordinator

Rusk County
311 E. Miner Avenue
Ladysmith, WI 54848
(715)-532-2257
aalbarado@ruskcountywi.us



- Economic Development
- Community Development
- Revolving Loan Fund
- Enterprise Center
- Rusk County Airport
- Rusk County Tourism

Ms. Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator
Division of Digital Access, Consumer & Environmental Affairs
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower – 6th Floor
Madison, WI 53707-9100

Re: Letter of Support for Citizens Connected Broadband Grant Application

Dear Ms. Nieto,

We are pleased that Citizens Connected is applying for Broadband Grant funding for a project in the Town of Chetek that will also improve services for residents in Rusk County. We would like to offer our support for their application.

The COVID-19 pandemic has both expanded and highlighted the disparity that exists between homes and businesses with quality broadband access and those without. With limited resources and the high cost of infrastructure, the opportunity to address this disparity and help our citizens is limited. Quality internet access is a barrier for many of our County students and families, not just those in poverty as broadband access is not available in many areas. The project being pursued by Citizens Connected will improve broadband in an area of our County where it is needed.

In order to make this project a reality, Rusk County will support the efforts of Citizens Connected in whatever ways we find possible including assisting with any permitting necessary, and addressing any issues if they arise.

Without access to quality, reliable internet services Wisconsin's rural businesses and communities will continue to be left behind in the changing economy. In addition, fast reliable internet will also improve the standard of living and access to educational opportunities for families. Please give your full consideration to these important projects and give Citizens Connected the opportunity to fulfill our mutual goal of a fully connected Wisconsin.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at (715) 532-2257 or aalbarado@ruskcountyny.us. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rollins

Andy Albarado
Rusk County Administrative Coordinator / Economic Development Director

Edina Realty

a Berkshire Hathaway affiliate

An affiliate of Edina Realty Home Services, a complete real estate services company

Hello Public Service Commission,

I am a managing broker for Edina Realty with agents serving the areas including the Towns of Dovre, Sumner, and Chetek.

I am writing to you to address the need for reliable broadband service in Northwestern WI and how this impacts our ability to market to sell a home.

Often during the buyer consultation one of the first questions is what access the property has to high-speed internet service. Factors we consider when listing a home would be the lack of reliable broadband and discussing with the sellers to disclose this, as it may impede a buyer's ability to work, further online schooling, or conduct business from home when necessary. Internet service has been a condition to offers that have been written and reasons why we price a home lower than market average because of the lack of service to the area.

Edina Realty strongly supports Citizens Telephone Cooperative, Inc efforts to bring reliable broadband to the Towns of Dovre, Sumner and Chetek. Based on Citizens Telephone Cooperative, Inc performance since its inception, we respectfully request that the grant request(s) being submitted by Citizens Telephone Cooperative, Inc be approved.

I would be happy to answer any additional questions you may have about how this impacts our real estate clients and our business. Edina Realty and the agents in Northwestern WI look forward to continued progress of reliable broadband to our served areas.

Sincerely,



Mary Jo Bowe

Sales Manager/Broker

Maryjobowe@edinarealty.com

Kristy Nieto, Broadband Grant
Administrator Division Administrator
Division of Digital Access, Consumer & Environmental Affairs
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Dear Division Administrator Nieto,
Thank you for considering my local internet provider, Citizens Connected, for a grant in the upcoming broadband grant selection process.

As you are well aware, rural and underserved areas face many challenges in connecting our residents to reliable broadband services. These areas tend to be poorer and lack access to many services, not just internet. That is why your support through the grant process is so vital.

As a local Realtor, I can tell you firsthand how important internet access is. Internet access is no longer a luxury – it is necessary for economic development, education, and healthcare. As people search for housing, I am constantly asked what type of internet service a home has. For clients looking to work from home, homeschool their kids, or access their doctor over telemedicine, having internet access can be a dealbreaker. In order to be able to attract these families and professionals that are moving out of urban areas, we must have reliable access.

The grant requested will help connect over 67 locations in southern Barron County. Once completed, this project will continue to allow our part of the state to grow and succeed. If there was ever a place to invest public money, it is with local internet service providers like Citizens Connected. They have a track record of providing services to all underserved customers in their territory – not just those who can afford to pay the most.

Thank you for your work in support broadband expansion!

Romaine Quinn - Realtor®
Real Estate Solutions
715.651.9578
1815A S. Main Street
Rice Lake, WI 54868



To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing this letter to inquire about fiber optic internet service for my home. My wife and I have been in contact with Citizens Connected at least once a year for the past several years in the hopes that this will be the year we are able to gain access to fiber optic internet.

My family consists of my wife and three children. My wife and I are both physician assistants. We have found it nearly impossible to work from home because our current internet service through our Verizon 5G cell phones as hot spots is woefully inadequate. We use the 15 GB/phone by the middle of the month, before the service speed is reduced to 600 Kbps until the next billing cycle starts. The lack of access to high speed internet was even more noticeable during the initial months of the Covid pandemic when we were tasked with telecommunicating with our patient's instead of face-to-face visits in the office.

My two oldest daughters also use the internet mainly for educational purposes. Although they are only in kindergarten and 4K and using it to learn the alphabet, basic numbers and math, and learning to read, I anticipate their usage for continued education and learning will only continue to increase. Our third child will be following in their footsteps soon enough.

We currently do not use the internet for entertainment purposes. We receive Netflix through snail mail in the form of DVD's, streaming video may be a nice option if it were possible.

Thank you for your time and I hope another year doesn't go by before we will have access to reliable high-speed internet service.

Sincerely,

Ed and Jessica Pisarcik



5ZM7Sef 7j ZTlfI

CHETEK-WEYERHAEUSER
AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Big Enough for Opportunities, Small Enough to Care

1001 Knapp Street, Chetek, WI 54728
Phone: (715) 924-2226 | Fax: (715) 924-2376
www.cwasd.k12.wi.us

February 25, 2022

Dennis Klaila, Program and Policy Analyst Advanced
Public Service Commission
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower – 6th Floor
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

Dear Mr. Klaila,

I am writing to voice my support of Citizens Connected to provide broadband internet service to the Towns of Chetek and Dovre. Throughout both these areas, we find school families either underserved or unserved. Many residents have little or no digital connectivity, creating a digital divide among our residents and school district students. While some internet options may exist in these areas, the available options have very low data speeds or unreliable connectivity. To complicate matters, the cellular service in these areas can be spotty, rendering any tethering device useless for users.

As the superintendent of the Chetek-Weyerhaeuser Area School District, I am highly in favor of Citizens Connected providing areas within our school district with access to broadband internet. I can attest to the hardship the lack of service causes the families of our school district. Our children struggle to participate in distance learning. Students cannot access our “anytime, anywhere” course content, access the internet for research, or complete online college applications or college scholarships. Outside of the school day, many of these students must find a way to return to the school to utilize their only reliable and robust connection. Unfortunately, not all these students have transportation to the school, further widening the equity issue we must overcome so all students have equal access and opportunities.

I believe access to broadband internet is no longer an amenity but rather a necessity. It will not only enhance the quality of life in the community, but it will also serve as an avenue to connect our school families with the digital resources that they are now missing.

I strongly encourage you to approve the grant request that Citizens Connected submits on behalf of the Towns of Chetek and Dovre.

Thank you for considering our school district students in providing them with reliable internet access no matter where they reside. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Johnson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mark Johnson
Superintendent



DAVE ARMSTRONG

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 75TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

March 16, 2022

Chairperson Rebecca Valcq
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Chairperson Valcq,

I am pleased to support Citizens Connected's broadband expansion grant application to expand service to underserved areas in Barron County, specifically the Towns of Chetek and Dovre. This project will improve access for almost 70 locations.

As Representative of the 75th Assembly District, which includes Barron County, and as Barron County's economic development director, I appreciate Citizens Connected's commitment to expand broadband service to an underserved portion of the county. Broadband is important for both residents and businesses, and Citizen Connected's proposal provides opportunities to these groups. As seen in the past two years, opportunities like these are crucial, especially in rural areas where traditional opportunities already require significant travel. Enhanced broadband will open up possibilities in an economically challenged area.

Once barriers to broadband expansion are removed, Barron County will improve its position as a destination for startups, expanding and relocating businesses, and telecommuters and working families relocating here. Barron County's proximity to Minneapolis-St. Paul and Eau Claire provides huge potential markets. New business begets skilled workers, increased home values, and increased tax base; new families expand and revitalize our workforce. The investment by Citizens Connected and the State of Wisconsin through broadband expansion grants will be of significant economic benefit to the residents and businesses of Barron County.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at (608) 266-2519 at Rep.Armstrong@legis.wi.gov.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave B. Armstrong".

Dave Armstrong
State Representative
75th Assembly District



ROB SUMMERFIELD

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 67th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

February 16, 2022

Chairperson Rebecca Valcq
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Chairperson Valcq:

I strongly support Citizens Connected's broadband expansion grant application to help fund their project in the Townships of Dovre and Chetek in Barron County.

While these townships are just outside of the district I represent, I know that this project will greatly benefit the people of Dovre and Chetek and the entire area. In addition, Citizens Connected is based in my district, and I am familiar with the great service they provide. Broadband connection is becoming increasingly important for the lives and economic wellbeing of rural Americans as they seek to work and learn remotely and utilize telehealth services.

The Townships of Dovre and Chetek know how beneficial this grant can be, which is why they initiated the project and pledged township funds towards it. This project is proactive and will provide residents with all the new opportunities that broadband connection can bring.

My constituents and I thank you for your fair and full consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Rob Summerfield".

Rep. Rob Summerfield

To Whom It May Concern,

I work from home every day. Also we like to stream movies. Right now I all I have is a MIFI for internet and it is not the fastest.

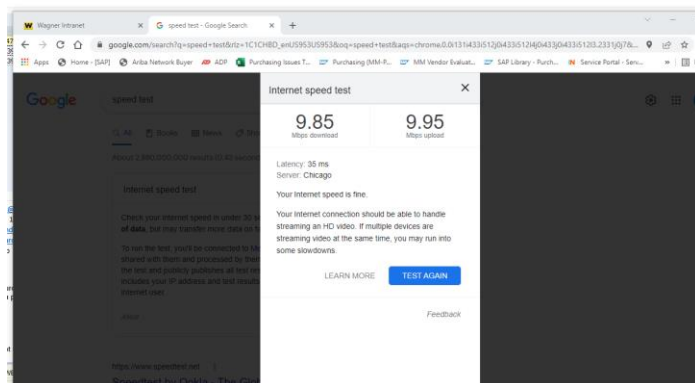
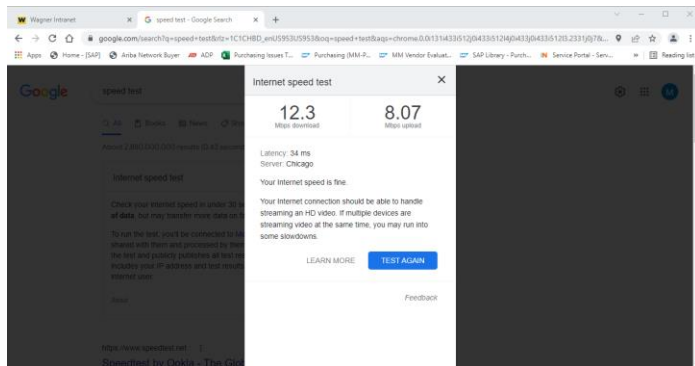
I have a lot of online meetings and uploading and downloading from share point sites.

Some days my speed is better and others it is very bad.

I am going to include some speed tests. One for just regular working nothing else in the house is streaming or doing anything on the internet.

One is when I am trying to download from my works share point then upload.

It will help me very much to have fiber internet.



Thank you very much

Mary Elwood

Robert Bitney
681 27¼ Street
Chetek, WI 54728

I would like to tell you how much we need a new broadband high speed internet. Everytime I would call and make a complaint, I would be on the phone for over an hour and wouldn't be able to talk to anyone. I have waited on a call for 65 minutes and kept being put on hold.

We are restricted to who we can get service from due to our location. It would be great if we are able to get reliable internet service for a reasonable price. As Centurylink prices increase, we still have the same speed of the internet. They did come out to bump up the speed but it's still at the same speed.

Everytime my daughter is trying to work on her college homework and then switch to work from home, it makes it very difficult for her to run her programs when our internet is very slow. Once everyone is on their devices, it makes it harder for one of us to do our homework or do our jobs at home.

The internet is very important to us as our cell phone service is not that reliable at our location either, so we need to maintain a landline.

Fiber optic broadband would be so important to us in the town of Chetek.

Sincerely,

Robert Bitney

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Bitney', with a stylized flourish at the end.

5ZMM7Sef 7j ZTIfN

To whom it may concern:

We are sending this email in regards to the interest of having fiber optic service installed and be available in our area. We have a seasonal place we use 7 months out of the year. We currently utilize a hotspot from our phones from Green Bay but are VERY interested in having internet service at this location.

Our address is 2957 12th Ave Chetek 54728 Our current service in Green Bay is Spectrum. We would use the internet mainly for work from home and entertainment.

Thank You

John and Cathy Caelwaerts
920-609-0450

5ZMM7Sef 7j ZTIfO

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing to ask that we be provided access to fiber, we currently have our cellphones and that is all we have for internet. This makes it difficult for our children to keep up in today's school requirements both grade school and college level. We also would like access to the entertainment that fiber access can provide. My wife's work from home requires alot of internet use and having access to a sit down computer would make things much more efficient for the work she conducts online.

I know we are on the Rusk County side of county line Rd but there's already a pipe ran under the road to send fiber to our side, this has been a very frustrating struggle for our family and we would just like the same opportunities for our children that the majority of other children get.

Please let me know if there's anything we can do to help speed up the process of getting access.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Matthew Reed

N2566 County line Rd

Chetek, WI 54728

(715)790-7426- Melanie Reed

(715)764-2332- Matthew Reed

5ZMM7Sef 7j ZTlf P

To Whom It Concerns,

I would like to express an interest in receiving high speed fiber optic service at my home. My address is N2498 County Line Road, Chetek.

I used to have Century Link, but I had to disconnect this service due to financial concerns a few years ago. Now I am unable to get their service because they aren't taking new customers in my area.

I use the internet for my TV cable service. I am partially disabled and live on a fixed income. I used to watch a lot of movies through my internet.

Thank you,
Tim Sunderland

5ZMM7Sef 7j ZTlf Q

To Whom It May Concern,

Just a quick note to let Citizens know that we are excited and very interested in the upcoming fiber optic project for our area. We have been with Centurytel/CenturyLink for many years. Our internet goes down often, and is always VERY SLOW. We use the internet for our business and our own personal use and would welcome any improvement. Hopefully this project starts soon as we would be so happy to have better services available to us.

Sincerely

Tom and Kim Mikkelson
RPM Sales and Service LLC