



# BROADBANDUSA

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<b>Organization:</b>	<b>Ronan Telephone Company</b>
<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Montana West</b>
<b>Project Type:</b>	<b>Comprehensive Community Infrastructure</b>
<b>State:</b>	<b>Montana</b>
<b>Federal Award:</b>	<b>\$13,796,640</b>

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

**Ronan Telephone Company** is proposing a new high-speed middle-mile fiber network that would expand broadband services across an underserved region of Montana with high unemployment rates and a great need for improved Internet services. Ronan's Montana West project proposes to expand broadband and high-speed wireless services to the Blackfeet and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Native American Tribes, while improving access options in the underserved communities of St. Mary, Babb, Santa Rita, Heart Butte, Elmo, Big Arm, and Evaro, Montana. The project plans to make the economic development and recovery of these communities a chief focus of its operations by linking residents to skills training and distance learning. This investment would also improve existing bandwidth and connectivity to the Blackfeet Reservation community of East Glacier Park.

The Montana West project also proposes to:

- Connect up to 30 community anchor institutions, including four K-12 schools, six public safety entities, two libraries, five government facilities, three community colleges, one university, and nine healthcare providers, with the capability to serve roughly 75 additional anchor institutions.
- Construct 295 miles of new fiber and incorporate 434 miles of existing fiber to facilitate more affordable and accessible broadband service for approximately 31,000 households and 3,200 businesses by enabling local Internet service providers to utilize the project's open network at 17 points of interconnection. Project partner and last-mile provider Hot Springs Telephone Company plans to utilize the network to connect more than 350 rural households within its territory.
- Partner with Health Information Exchange of Montana, a healthcare information cooperative serving 28 rural hospitals, clinics, and healthcare providers, to facilitate telemedicine and improved healthcare delivery for rural residents.

## ORGANIZATION'S HISTORY

Ronan Telephone Company is an independently-owned local exchange carrier and Internet service provider with over 50 years experience serving Ronan, Pablo, and Mission Valley residents. It currently serves approximately 4,300 customers over 122 square miles in the northwest corner of Montana, and provides wireless services to the Blackfeet Reservation through a jointly-owned partnership with the Tribe known as Oki Communications.

## PROJECT PARTNERS

- Health Information Exchange of Montana

Data provided in the project description is based on information supplied by the applicant. An executive summary of this application can be found on [www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandusa](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandusa).

For press-related inquiries, contact 202-482-7002 or [press@ntia.doc.gov](mailto:press@ntia.doc.gov). For the general public, contact [BTOP@ntia.doc.gov](mailto:BTOP@ntia.doc.gov).

Made possible by the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program

Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

