



Broadband Infrastructure Application
Submission to NTIA – Broadband Technology Opportunities Program

Submitted Date: 3/26/2010 9:58:37 PM	Easygrants ID: 6355
Funding Opportunity: Broadband Technology Opportunities Program	Applicant Organization: RONAN TELEPHONE CO
Task: Submit Application - BTOP	Applicant Name: Mr. Gerald Beeks

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A. General Application Information

Applicant Information	
Name and Federal ID for Applicant	
DUNS Number	006827927
CCR # (CAGE)	56QE2
Legal Business Name	RONAN TELEPHONE CO
Point of Contact (POC)	VICKI WEISHAAR 4066769244 Ext. vickic@ronan.net
Alternate POC	ROBERT ERICKSON 4066762751 Ext. rfe@ronan.net
Electronic Business POC	VICKI WEISHAAR 4066762751 Ext. vickic@ronan.net
Alternate Electronic Business POC	ROBERT ERICKSON 4066762751 Ext. rfe@ronan.net

Name and Contact Information of Person to be Contacted on Matters Involving this Application:	
Prefix	Mr.
First Name	Gerald
Middle Name	
Last Name	Beeks
Suffix	
Telephone Number	406-676-9215



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Fax Number	406-676-8889
Email	beeks@ronan.net
Title	Director, New Business

Additional Contact Information of Person to be Contacted on Matters Involving this Application:

Project Role	Name	Phone	Email
Secondary Point of Contact	Mr. Jay Wilson, Preston	4066769212	jaywp@ronan.net

Environmental Point of Contact

Prefix: Mr. Name: Preston, Jay Suffix: Telephone Number: 4066769212 Title: Chairman

Organization Classification

Type of Organization	For-profit Entity
Is the organization a small business?	Yes
Does the organization meet the definition of a socially and economically disadvantaged small business concern?	No

Authorized Organizational Representative

AOR Name	ERICKSON, ROBERT
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Result	Re-Notify
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Project Title and Project Description

Project Title: Montana West

Project Description: This is a cooperative effort by Ronan Telephone Co., the Health Information Exchange of Montana, Hot Springs Telephone Co. the Blackfeet Reservation and the Flathead Reservation to build a 257 mile fiber backbone between Conrad and Missoula. Existing, currently unused fiber facilities are dedicated to the project, reducing cost and to provide in-kind match. Some last mile is provided as needed.

CCI Priority Checklist

The following items were selected from the CCI Priority Checklist:

1. This project will deploy Middle Mile broadband infrastructure to community anchor institutions.
2. The project will deploy Middle Mile broadband infrastructure and has incorporated a public-private partnership among government, non-profit and for-profits entities, and other key community stakeholders.
3. This project will deploy Middle Mile broadband infrastructure in economically distressed areas.
4. This project will deploy Middle Mile broadband infrastructure to community colleges.
5. This project will deploy Middle Mile broadband infrastructure to public safety entities.
6. This project will deploy Middle Mile broadband infrastructure and either includes a Last Mile infrastructure component in unserved or underserved areas or has received commitments from one or more Last Mile broadband service providers to utilize the Middle Mile components. Any Last Mile components in rural areas do not exceed 20% of the total eligible costs of the project.
7. This project will deploy Middle Mile broadband infrastructure and the applicant has proposed to contribute 30 percent or more in non-federal cost match.

Comprehensive Community Infrastructure Components

The following items were selected from the Comprehensive Community Infrastructure Components:



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Middle Mile

Last Mile Rural

BIP Applicants

Have you also applied to BIP for funding in the sample proposed funded service area?

- No

If Yes, please provide the project title and Easygrants ID number:

Title of Joint BIP Application:

Easygrants ID:

Other Applications

Is this application being submitted in coordination with any other application being submitted during this round of funding?

- No

Easygrants ID	Project Title

If YES, please explain any synergies and/or dependencies between this project and any other applications.

Individual Background Screening

Is the Applicant exempt from the Department of Commerce requirements regarding individual background screening in connection with any award resulting from this Application?

- No, Applicant is subject to these requirements

If the answer to the above question is "No," please identify each key individual associated with the Applicant who would be required to complete Form CD-346, "Applicant for Funding Assistance," in connection with any award resulting from this Application:



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Name	Title	Employer
Gerald Beeks	Director, Business Development	Ronan Telephone Company
Jay Wilson Preston	Chairman	Ronan Telephone Company

B. Executive Summary, Project Purpose and Benefits

Essay Question

Executive Summary of the proposed project:

Background--

A look at the geography of Northwestern and Western Montana quickly points out that the Rocky Mountains have a profound effect on the placement of towns, cities, and population growth. Because of the mountainous terrain, population centers are scattered fairly far apart, and tend to cluster in the valleys where rivers come out of the mountains.

The difficulties created by the rugged terrain have caused a scarcity of providers of long-haul communications facilities between those towns on the West side of the Divide and the East side. Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) is a notable exception in that they have recently placed fiber along their right of way between Whitefish and Conrad, through Glacier National Park and the Blackfeet reservation.

Recognizing the lack of connectivity options for the Health Care industry in this region, the Health Information Exchange of Montana Consortium (HIEM) based out of the Kalispell Regional Medical Center in Kalispell, applied for and won an award in 2006 from the Rural Health Care Division of the United Service Fund, to develop and install a region-wide network to connect many of the hospitals and clinics in Northwestern Montana. This is an ongoing project for HIEM and they have already contracted with BNSF for a 30-year lease of fiber facilities between Whitefish and Conrad. This is only the first part of their network, as they are planning on a new fiber build between Kalispell and Libby at the Northwest corner of the state with work



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scheduled to start the summer of 2010. As part of their overall plan, HIEM needs to connect with hospitals in Whitefish and Missoula from Kalispell. This project will complete these connections for HIEM.

Ronan Telephone Company (RTC) is a small Independent Local Exchange Carrier in Ronan Montana, in the middle of the Mission Valley. Our exchange is located entirely within the boundaries of the Flathead reservation, and as such, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes is our largest customer. RTC has placed fiber throughout the Mission Valley, connecting St. Ignatius, Charlo, Ronan, Pablo, and Polson, but to date, geography has made it uneconomical to connect the Tribe's outlying communities of Elmo, Big Arm, Hot Springs and Arlee. RTC has also entered into a partnership with the Blackfoot Tribe with a jointly-owned business, Oki Communications, to provide wireless Internet services to the residents of the reservation. Oki has been operational for three years, and is providing service to the communities of East Glacier, Browning, and Cut Bank along with the Eastern flank of the reservation. The Blackfoot Tribe wants to extend this service to Heart Butte, 25 miles south of Browning, and to the St. Mary Valley, 40 miles to the Northwest, but Oki has been unable to move forward as a result of lack of funding and affordable backhaul choices. This project is an opportunity to extend fiber to Heart Butte and the St. Mary Valley and provide this valuable service to the residents and businesses in those outlying locations.

Montana West will build a 342 mile, high-speed middle mile fiber backbone between Conrad and Missoula, Montana. It will include some existing fiber from the Health Information Exchange of Montana (HIEM), from Ronan Telephone Company (RTC), and from Hot Springs Telephone Company (HSTC), and connect with new fiber that will be installed by the project. In-place fiber that is currently unused, will be dedicated to the project as an in-kind match. This project will meet the critical needs of many anchor institutions for a high-bandwidth, low cost Internet connection alternative. The Blackfoot Tribe will get a fiber connection to the communities of Heart Butte, St. Mary and Babb and other Tribal programs in Browning, as well as the HIEM connection to the hospital. The Salish and Kootenai Tribes on the Flathead Reservation will be provided with exclusive fiber to the outlying towns of Elmo, Big Arm, Hot Springs, and Arlee and network the entire reservation into the Internet at the fiber hotel in Missoula. HIEM will be able to complete their links between Whitefish and Kalispell, and from Kalispell through the Mission Valley, and on into Missoula to the Health Care Institutions there. High-speed Connections are planned for Community Colleges, Hospitals and Health Care Institutions, School Districts, Libraries, Public Safety Institutions and local governments.



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High-speed wireless Internet using the 700Mhz license acquired by RTC in 2002, will be installed in Arlee, Evaro, Elmo/Big Arm, St. Mary/Babb, and Heart Butte.

Project purpose:

The purpose of this project is to provide new or improved high-speed Internet access to a significant population of residents, anchor institutions, and businesses throughout Northwestern Montana. Included in the funding area are two reservations, the Blackfeet and the Flathead. The fiber backbone created by this project will be available to not only the two Tribes, but other service providers as well, and will cause more Internet usage because it will be more affordable, and in some cases appear where there is no fiber yet.

This is a cooperative effort with the Health Information Exchange of Montana (HIEM), Ronan Telephone Company (RTC), Hot Springs Telephone Company (HSTC), and the Blackfeet and the Salish/Kootenai tribes. Direct connections will go to some of the hospitals and clinics that are supported by HIEM, and to the libraries and community colleges supported by a related grant request submitted by HIEM and the University of Montana.

Recovery Act and Other Governmental Collaboration:

Governmental Collaboration—

Montana West is cooperating with the Health Information Exchange of Montana (HIEM) and will provide fiber connectivity to many of the institutions in their region, including the Browning Hospital, the Heart Butte Clinic, North Valley Hospital in Whitefish, St. Luke’s Hospital in Ronan, and St. Patrick’s Hospital in Missoula. A support letter from HIEM for Montana West is included with this documentation.

In addition, Montana West has been working with the Tribal governments of both the Blackfeet and the Salish/Kootenai to provide much needed connectivity to the governmental programs of the tribes. Tribal resolutions supporting the Montana West project are included with this documentation.

Fit with BTOP CCI Priorities:

BTOP CCI Priorities—

1. Extend broadband access to unserved areas



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Montana West will take middle mile fiber connectivity to many unserved areas of Northwestern Montana. Communities such as St. Mary and Babb, Santa Rita and Heart Butte on the Blackfeet reservation, and Elmo, Big Arm and Evaro on the Flathead reservation.

2. Improve access to underserved areas

Many areas in the funding area have access to the Internet, with limited bandwidth. Fiber will bring a quantum increase in the availability of high-speed connectivity to communities such as East Glacier Park, and West Glacier Village.

3. Expand broadband access to a wide range of institutions and individuals, including vulnerable populations.

Following are the institutions that will benefit from Montana West fiber:

Community Medical Center
2827 Fort Missoula Road, Missoula, Montana, 59804 7408
USA
Tel: (406) 728-4100

Missoula VA Primary Care Clinic
2687 Palmer St., Suite C, Missoula, Montana, MT 59808
USA
Tel: 406 327 5150

St. Joseph Medical Center
6 Thirteenth Avenue East, P.O. Box 1010, Polson, Montana, MT 59860
USA
Tel: (406) 883-5377
Fax: (406) 883-8488

St. Luke Community Hospital
107 Sixth Avenue Sw, Ronan, Montana, MT 59864 2634



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USA
Tel: (406) 676-4441

St. Patrick Hospital
500 West Broadway, Missoula, Montana, MT 59802 4096
USA
Tel: (406) 543-7271

Browning Community College

Flathead Community College

Salish/Kootenai College

4. Offer the potential for economic growth and job creation
Montana West will create direct employment for 2 teams of fiber installers, one each from both the Blackfeet and Flathead reservation, for a total of 14 direct jobs. This training and experience will create a new skill set on the reservations that will enable both on and off reservation employment.

5. Support viable, sustainable, and scalable projects.
A new fiber backbone throughout this region will enable opportunities for new business to come to the area.

Is the applicant seeking a waiver of the Buy American provision pursuant to section x.Q of the NOFA?



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- No

Is the applicant delinquent on any federal debt?

- No

If Yes, justification for delinquency:

Are you seeking a waiver of any requirement set forth in the NOFA that is not mandated by statute or applicable law?

- No

Is the applicant a current recipient of a grant or loan from RUS?

- No

C. Partners

Are you partnering with any other key institutions, organizations, or other entities for this project?

- Yes

If YES, key partners are listed below:

Project Role: Other Name: Smith, Kipman Phone: 4067516687 Email: kipsmith@krmc.org Address 1: 310 Sunnyvale lane Address 2: Address 3: City: Kalispell State: Montana Zip Code: 59901 Organization: Health Information Exchange of Montana Organization Type: Non-profit Corporation Small business: No Socially and economically disadvantaged small business concern: No

Description of the involvement of the partners listed above in the project.



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The Health Information Exchange of Montana (HIEM) is a not for profit Corporation consisting of several Health Care Institutions in Northwestern Montana. In 2007 HIEM was awarded \$13.6M in Rural Health Care Pilot Program funds by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in an effort to establish a secure, dedicated network with sufficient bandwidth and essential connectivity between each HIEM member and qualified end-user to more readily support high bandwidth healthcare applications.

HIEM has contracted for a 30-year lease of fiber facilities from Burlington Northern Railway from Conrad to Whitefish Montana. HIEM will provide a large part of the Montana West network with this facility, consisting of dark unused fibers for use by the new network. In exchange, Montana West will provide fiber connection to the Health Care Institutions, along the route already leased and down the Mission Valley to St. Luke in Ronan, and to Missoula with a connection to St. Patricks hospital. Care will be taken to ensure that there will be no duplication of Federal Funds. Fiber that will be provided by HIEM will not be used as in-kind match, even though this will create significant savings for the overall network build. HIEM has provided a letter of support for Montana West and is included in the upload portion of this grant request.

D. Congressional Districts

Applicant Headquarters

- Montana

Project Service States

Montana

Project Service Areas

Montana - At-Large

Will any portion of your proposed project serve federally recognized tribal entities?

- Yes



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Indicate each federally recognized tribal entity your proposed project will serve.

Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

Blackfeet Tribal Business Council

Have you consulted with each of the federally recognized tribal entities identified above?

- Yes

E. Service Area Details

Is the applicant seeking a waiver for providing less than 100% coverage of a service area?

- No

Project Details

Service Area Type: Last Mile
Service Area Name: Heart Butte
Rural Classification of the Last Mile Service Area: Rural
Service Status of the Last Mile Service Area: Underserved

<p>If Service Status is "Underserved" please select at least one applicable option from this list. The rate of broadband subscribership for the proposed funded service area is 40% of households or less.</p>
--

Total Square Miles in Service Area: 5
Total Population in Proposed Service Area: 648
Total Number of Households in Service Area: 155
Total Number of Businesses in Service Area: 23
Total Number of Community Anchor Institutions and Public Safety Entities in Proposed Funded Service Area: 4
Unemployment Rate in the Service Area: 37
Median Income in the Service Area: 9,793
Estimated Percentage of Households with Access to Broadband: 65



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Estimated Percentage of Households Subscribing to Broadband: 20

Service Area Type: Last Mile
Service Area Name: St. Mary/Babb
Rural Classification of the Last Mile Service Area:Rural
Service Status of the Last Mile Service Area: Underserved

If Service Status is "Underserved" please select at least one applicable option from this list.
 The rate of broadband subscribership for the proposed funded service area is 40% of households or less.

Total Square Miles in Service Area: 55
Total Population in Proposed Service Area: 548
Total Number of Households in Service Area: 180
Total Number of Businesses in Service Area: 15
Total Number of Community Anchor Institutions and Public Safety Entities in Proposed Funded Service Area: 1
Unemployment Rate in the Service Area: 31
Median Income in the Service Area: 9,500
Estimated Percentage of Households with Access to Broadband:
Estimated Percentage of Households Subscribing to Broadband:

Service Area Type: Last Mile
Service Area Name: Elmo/Big Arm
Rural Classification of the Last Mile Service Area:Rural
Service Status of the Last Mile Service Area: Underserved

If Service Status is "Underserved" please select at least one applicable option from this list.
 The rate of broadband subscribership for the proposed funded service area is 40% of households or less.

Total Square Miles in Service Area: 6
Total Population in Proposed Service Area: 274
Total Number of Households in Service Area: 108
Total Number of Businesses in Service Area: 8



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Total Number of Community Anchor Institutions and Public Safety Entities in Proposed Funded Service Area: 4
Unemployment Rate in the Service Area: 25
Median Income in the Service Area: 13,675
Estimated Percentage of Households with Access to Broadband: 75
Estimated Percentage of Households Subscribing to Broadband: 35

Service Area Type: Last Mile
Service Area Name: Arlee
Rural Classification of the Last Mile Service Area: Rural
Service Status of the Last Mile Service Area: Underserved

If Service Status is "Underserved" please select at least one applicable option from this list.
 The rate of broadband subscribership for the proposed funded service area is 40% of households or less.

Total Square Miles in Service Area: 7
Total Population in Proposed Service Area: 602
Total Number of Households in Service Area: 225
Total Number of Businesses in Service Area: 22
Total Number of Community Anchor Institutions and Public Safety Entities in Proposed Funded Service Area: 4
Unemployment Rate in the Service Area: 16
Median Income in the Service Area: 22,334
Estimated Percentage of Households with Access to Broadband: 75
Estimated Percentage of Households Subscribing to Broadband: 35

Service Area Type: Last Mile
Service Area Name: Evaro
Rural Classification of the Last Mile Service Area: Rural
Service Status of the Last Mile Service Area: Underserved

If Service Status is "Underserved" please select at least one applicable option from this list.
 The rate of broadband subscribership for the proposed funded service area is 40% of households or less.



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Total Square Miles in Service Area: 17
Total Population in Proposed Service Area: 329
Total Number of Households in Service Area: 110
Total Number of Businesses in Service Area: 12
Total Number of Community Anchor Institutions and Public Safety Entities in Proposed Funded Service Area: 3
Unemployment Rate in the Service Area: 8
Median Income in the Service Area: 31,666
Estimated Percentage of Households with Access to Broadband: 85
Estimated Percentage of Households Subscribing to Broadband: 40

Service Area Type: Middle Mile
Service Area Name: Montana West
Rural Classification of the Last Mile Service Area: Rural
Service Status of the Last Mile Service Area: Served

If Service Status is "Underserved" please select at least one applicable option from this list.

Total Square Miles in Service Area: 5,735
Total Population in Proposed Service Area: 82,595
Total Number of Households in Service Area: 30,949
Total Number of Businesses in Service Area: 3,219
Total Number of Community Anchor Institutions and Public Safety Entities in Proposed Funded Service Area: 79
Unemployment Rate in the Service Area: 12
Median Income in the Service Area: 22,193
Estimated Percentage of Households with Access to Broadband: 65
Estimated Percentage of Households Subscribing to Broadband: 45

F. Community Anchor Summary

Community Anchor Summary



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Schools (k-12)	3
Libraries	1
Medical and Healthcare Providers	13
Public Safety Entities	4
Community Colleges	3
Public Housing	0
Other Institutions of Higher Education	1
Other Community Support Organization	1
Other Government Facilities	5
TOTAL COMMUNITY ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS	31
Historically Black colleges and Universities	0
Tribal Colleges and Universities	2
Alaska Native Serving Institutions	0
Hispanic Serving Institutions	0
Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions	0
TOTAL MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS	2

G. Project Benefits



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Demographics

Jobs	
How many direct jobs-years will be created from this project?	52
How many indirect jobs will be created from this project?	44
How many jobs will be induced from this project?	54

Methodology used to estimate jobs:

Use of the rule in the President's Council of Economic Advisors white paper. \$13,777.725 divided by \$92,000 yields 149.76 job years. 36% of that number represent induced job-years, or 54 jobs, and the remaining 96 job-years are direct and indirect jobs. Two teams of fiber installers will be hired and trained, one from each of the two reservations, each team will have 7 people, so a total of 14 people for 3 years equals 52 actual direct job years for the project. More importantly, these 14 people will have learned a new skill set that will be useful beyond and outside of the project and its life span.

Project Impact:

This project will bring very high speed internet connectivity alternatives to a large portion of Montana and at such a cost that it will stimulate usage and adoption that has been stalled due to cost. A derivative will be increased productivity, and new business and workers will be attracted to Montana which will drive economic development.

Vulnerable Populations:

We will be providing high speed connectivity to two Indian reservations, which will enable more adoption of technology and enrich the lives of the residents.

Level of Need:

Montana has been slow to adopt the Internet and the experience of research, education, health care, safety and better resource management that come with this type of connectivity. The reason for the slow rate of adoption is plainly high cost. Montanan's need a low cost high speed alternative. We intend to open up the Internet to all of the residents, businesses, and anchor institutions in our funding area at a cost that will allow a highly increased adoption rate.

H. Technology

Technology Type

Indicate the technology that will be used to deliver last mile services. The following items were selected:



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Wireline - Fiber-optic Cable

Wireless - Terrestrial Fixed

Other:

Technology Questions

Methodology for Area Status:

Analysis of the population data along with the number of existing service providers for each of the towns in the proposed funding area was performed using US Census data and with publicly available information from the Internet and the Public Service Commission.

Description of Network Openness:

Montana West will build a very robust 10Gig IP backbone throughout Western Montana with very strong connection points using Juniper switches in Cut Bank, Kalispell, Missoula, and Seattle with Cisco 3750G switches at intermediate connection points. It is our intention to make it easy for other providers to gain access to the low-cost bandwidth that will be made available with a direct Tier 1 connection to the Internet in Seattle. In fact, we fully expect to sell bandwidth to other providers in the region as part of our cash flow projection model.

System Design:

The main backbone will be fiber, either new build or existing where available, dedicated to the project. Core routers will be Juniper T320's, located in Cut Bank, Kalispell, and Missoula connected to a Juniper M120 in Seattle tied directly to the Internet through a 10Gige port on a 10-year IRU lease from 360 Networks. The Juniper T320 core router in Cut Bank will connect to a 10Gige port provided by 360 Networks, again on a 10-year IRU lease, going to the Juniper T320 in Missoula to provide a redundant self-healing ring, for reliability.

Laterals (middle mile or last mile) off of the backbone will be either fiber if the route permits it, or microwave if the distance to the site makes microwave more efficient. An additional mile of fiber per lateral connection has been included in the grant request, which would provide enough to shoot a microwave out to a customer for last mile backhaul, if needed. In either event the most cost effective route will be taken.



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Is the applicant seeking a waiver pursuant to section IX.C of the NOFA so as to sell or lease portions of the award-funded broadband facilities during their life?

No

I. Project Budget

Project Budget		
	Federal Grant Request	Match
Last Mile	333,135	0
Middle Mile	13,463,505	4,416,300
Total	13,796,640	4,416,300

Project Budget Total: \$18,212,940

Match Percent: 24.2%

Projects Outside Recommended Funding Range:



Outside Leverage	
Applicant is providing matching funds of at least 20% towards the total eligible project costs?	Yes
Matching cost detail	Ronan Telephone Company will provide 105 miles of installed fiber optic cabling to the project. This will be an in-kind match, reducing the miles needed for the overall fiber build by 105 Miles. Cost per fiber mile is \$42000, including all labor, equipment, materials, engineering and rights of way procurement and is based on current and recent fiber installations and job estimates of the same sizes and characteristics. A 105.5 mile in-kind match at \$42000 per mile yields \$4,416,300. This results in a 23.8% match on a grant request of \$14,142,725. The Spreadsheet entitled #6355 Montana West in the



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	supplemental information provides exact detail as to the number of miles of existing non-matching fiber, and existing match fiber being contributed to the project, as well as exact new build miles from point to point along the entire middle mile fiber route.
Unjust enrichment	This project is not receiving any Federal support of any kind at this time.
Disclosure of federal and/or state funding sources	This project is not receiving any Federal support of any kind at this time.
Budget reasonableness	Ronan Telephone Company is already providing the proposed services to many customers in our area, and has experience in designing, costing, and implementing wireline fiber based data services as well as wireless Internet, using our 700Mhz spectrum license procured from the FCC auction of 2002. Equipment, services and materials pricing was obtained from currently used providers and is competitive with the marketplace. Revenue and cost and subscriber estimates are based on actual experience in similar endeavors with a history to draw from.
Demonstration of need	The high cost of providing fiber based connectivity to rural Montana has precluded projects of this nature except for specific high-density locations around clusters of small towns. As stated in the executive summary, the geography of Montana with the Rocky Mountains in the Northwestern part of the state create a major obstacle for small town connectivity to the major Internet Hub in Missoula, with cost being the primary issue. It is unlikely that a major network of this type and location would ever be built without some form of Federal assistance.

Funds to States/Territories

States	Amount of Federal Grant Request
Montana	13,796,640

Funds to States/Territories Total: \$13,796,640



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J. Historical Financials

Matching Funds			
	2007	2008	2009
Revenue	5,567,397	5,268,543	5,158,477
Expenditures	5,275,019	5,157,001	4,539,191
Net Assets	5,550,019	5,661,968	6,281,255
Change in Net Assets from Prior Year	292,379	111,542	549,287
Bond Rating (if applicable)	n/a	n/a	n/a

K. Project Readiness

BTOP Organizational Readiness

Ronan Telephone Company is a full-service ILEC, providing wireline and wireless telephone service, cable tv service, and high-speed Internet connectivity to customers both within and outside our exchange. We have an experienced construction crew and the necessary equipment to place all types of cable, including fiber, both buried and aerial. We are equipped to bore under wetlands, roads and other obstacles where needed. RTC has placed approximately 90 miles of fiber throughout our exchange area and are in the process of planning for additional expansion. Our crews operate trenching machines, cable plows, directional boring machines in addition to lift trucks for aerial cable placement. We do our own splicing and placement of active hardware to light up the cables as well. Being in this business already, we have existing sources for all of the equipment, trucks, fiber and passive and active hardware that will be needed.

RTC has a front office and back office staff, with customer support, billing, accounting, marketing, sales and engineering all in place and operational. We expect to add personnel to these functions as the project grows and demand for services escalates.

We will train tribal crews for the placement of fiber in their respective areas, and will have an experienced foreman with these two teams for the entire project.



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RTC plans to contract with a Montana-based network management firm out of Bozeman to manage the entire network. This company, Cutthroat Communications, has over ten years of experience in managing large scale middle mile and last mile networks throughout the state. Ronan Telephone Company entered into a partnership with Cutthroat starting in 2004 to build and maintain a high-speed microwave link from St. Ignatius to Missoula, and that has been a very successful venture. Cutthroat manages this and other large networks out of their Network Operating Center in Bozeman.

Construction and Vendor Contracts

In that Ronan Telephone Company is already providing the services being proposed in our grant request, we have a variety of sources for the equipment, cable and active hardware that will be necessary for this project. We normally check several sources in order to obtain the best price for the quality/quantity we require. We will ensure that we continue that policy when using Federal funding, and will adhere to any procurement rules required by the funding agency.

Customer Base

Ronan Telephone Company presently serves the following customer base in the Mission Valley:

Wireline Telephone Service (POTS) 3065 access lines
Ronan/Pablo Exchange

DSL High Speed Internet 1420 lines
Ronan/Pablo Exchange

Wireless Internet (700Mhz)
 Polson 184 customers
 St. Ignatius 139 customers
 Arlee 52 customers

Cable TV
 St. Ignatius 59 customers
 Seeley Lake 32 customers
 Superior 77 customers
 Thompson Falls 51 customers



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Plains 111 customers

Wild Blue (Satellite) 190 customers

Ronan Telephone serves customers on the Blackfeet reservation in partnership with Oki Communications in Browning

Wireless Internet (700Mhz) 450 customers

Licenses, Regulatory Approvals and Agreements

Ronan Telephone Company acquired the C-block 700Mhz license in the 2002 FCC spectrum auction for the proposed funding area. This license will be used to provide wireless Internet services to the last mile projects in this grant request.

For Middle Mile on the Blackfeet reservation, Blackfeet Tribal planning has provided cost estimates to negotiate rights of way from Browning along the highways to both Heart Butte and Babb/St. Mary. These costs have been included in the cost estimate portion of our grant request. A large part of the fiber network is already leased from Burlington Northern, and access is already agreed upon with HIEM.

SPIN Number

Ronan Telephone Company
SPIN number 143002541

L. Environmental Questionnaire

Project Description

Middle Mile

A large part of this project is already in place, using Burlington Northern fiber along the railroad right of way.



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Where new fiber is to be installed, it will be placed either under or over the existing utility right of way along the highways or in the utility easements along the county roads. Aerial placements are made with contracts with the existing power companies. RTC has obtained preliminary contracts from Glacier Electric Cooperative for the Blackfeet reservation, and we have a working agreement with Mission Valley Power already, if we need to place fiber on poles. If we encounter an environmentally sensitive area such as designated wetlands in our planned route, we will either obtain permission to bore under it, or go around.

Last Mile

Last Mile installations will be 700Mhz wireless, using the license that RTC acquired in the 2002 FCC spectrum auction. The base station is usually located in the center of town in or on an existing tower in order to gain some height. Three of our existing base station antennas are located on water towers, in Browning, Cut Bank, and St. Ignatius. We do not anticipate construction activities in the last mile application, since we will be installing a base station, connecting to the fiber for backhaul, and using existing structures for our antenna. Being wireless, the customer premise equipment will be installed on or in the customers facility.

Property Changes

Middle Mile

A large part of this project is already in place, using Burlington Northern fiber along the railroad right of way.

Where new fiber is to be installed, it will be placed either under or over the existing utility right of way along the highways or in the utility easements along the county roads. Aerial placements are made with contracts with the existing power companies. RTC has obtained preliminary contracts from Glacier Electric Cooperative for the Blackfeet reservation, and we have a working agreement with Mission Valley Power already, if we need to place fiber on poles. If we encounter an environmentally sensitive area such as designated wetlands in our planned route, we will either obtain permission to bore under it, or go around.

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connecting to the fiber for backhaul, and using existing structures for our antenna. Being wireless, the customer premise equipment will be installed on or in the customers facility.

Buildings

Ronan Telephone Company does not propose to build any new structures for this project, and will use existing locations for connection points and hubs.

Wetlands

Middle Mile

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Critical Habitats

Montana West will not directly or indirectly affect any threatened, endangered or candidate species within or near critical habitats. A list of the endangered, threatened species in the counties relative to the Montana West Project is in the upload section of this application in PDF format.

Floodplain

Montana West will not be building within a floodplain.

Protected Land

Montana West will be constructing and placing optic fiber cable and facilities on both the Blackfeet and the Flathead Indian Reservations. RTC is already providing service on both of



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these reservations and works with the Tribal planning office to obtain authorization for rights of way and wetlands and cultural lands avoidance for all projects.

Coastal Area

Not Applicable

Brownfield

Not Applicable



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Uploads

The following pages contain the following uploads provided by the applicant:

Upload Name	File Name	Uploaded By	Uploaded Date
Service Offerings and Competitor Data	Service offerings template.xls	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Network Diagram	Montana West Google Image.jpg	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Network Diagram	Proposed Funded Service Area map.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Build Out Timeline	Timeline.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
List of Community Anchors and Points of Interest	Anchors and points of interest.xls	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Management Team Resumes and Organization Chart	Resume-Rosa E Tougas.doc	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Management Team Resumes and Organization Chart	Resume-Jay Preston.doc	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Management Team Resumes and Organization Chart	Resume-Gerald Beeks.doc	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010



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Management Team Resumes and Organization Chart	scanned org chart of companies.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Historical Financial Statements	RTC financials.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Budget Narrative	Budget Narrative.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Detailed Budget	detailed budget.xls	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Pro-forma Forecast	pro forma projections.xls	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Pro-forma Forecast	pro forma projections.xls	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Pro-forma Forecast	pro forma projections.xls	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Subscriber Estimates	subscriber estimates.xls	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Dashboard Metrics	dashboard metrics.doc	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Service Area Data	service area template-census.xls	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Service Area Data	Service offerings template.xls	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010



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Network Maps	Proposed Funded Service Area map.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
BTOP Certifications	BTOP Certification.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
SF-424 C and D	SF 424 C.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Supplemental Information	HIEM letter.doc	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Supplemental Information	St. Luke support letter page 1.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Supplemental Information	St. Luke support letter page 1.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Supplemental Information	Salish Kootenai support letter.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Supplemental Information	ronan schools support letter.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Supplemental Information	polson schools support letter.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
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Supplemental Information	Glacier County Commissioners.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Supplemental Information	Cut Bank Development Corp.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Supplemental Information	CSKT support letter.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Supplemental Information	Browning Public Schools support letter.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Supplemental Information	Blackfeet support letter.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Supplemental Information	Pro forma Middle Mile.xls	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Supplemental Information	Pro forma last mile sites.xls	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Supplemental Information	Montana West Project Plan.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010
Supplemental Information	#6355 Montana West mileage cost spreadsheet.pdf	Beeks, Gerald	03/26/2010