

COUNTY SUPERVISORS OFFICEWINNESHIEK COUNTY

201 WEST MAIN STREET DECORAH, IOWA 52101 (563) 382-2370
supervisors@co.winneshiek.ia.us

March 20, 2023

201 West Main Street
Decorah, IA 52101

Winneshiek County is submitting this application in response to the OCIO Invitation to Qualify for a Broadband Intervention Zone. Winneshiek County, located in northeast Iowa, has identified numerous areas of geographic concern as you can see by the application.

We believe a strong and robust broadband connection is important. It provides communication, online learning for K-12 students in our local community, plus allows for individuals to pursue online opportunities after high school. The possibilities are endless. It also provides Tele-doc options for those who cannot commute to a facility with specialized healthcare or during adverse weather conditions.

We thank you for your time in reviewing our application and will consider Winneshiek County as a priority for future funding.

Sincerely,

Winneshiek County Supervisors

COUNTY SUPERVISORS OFFICEWINNESHIEK COUNTY

201 WEST MAIN STREET DECORAH, IOWA 52101 (563) 382-2370

supervisors@co.winneshiek.ia.us

March 20, 2023

Winneshiek County Supervisors
201 West Main Street
Decorah, IA 52101

To the Iowa Office of the Chief Information Officer:

The Winneshiek County Supervisors are submitting an Invitation to Qualify for a Broadband Intervention Zone. We believe we have multiple geographic areas of concern within our county.

We have broken our county down into three sections that currently do not meet the required minimum broadband speed threshold; therefore, we will submit three geographic areas of concern for your review.

A robust and reliable broadband connection is as significant as electricity and water to local citizens. It gets utilized for online education and healthcare. It is also impactful for work from home individuals and economic development to our rural area.

Thank you for your consideration,

Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors

Courthouse
201 West Main Street
Decorah, Iowa 52101



Phone: 563-382-5786
Fax: 563-382-8491

March 17, 2023

Winneshiek County Supervisors
201 W Main St.
Decorah, IA 52101

RE: Support for Winneshiek County Broadband Intervention Zone Status

Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing in support of Winneshiek County being classified as a Broadband Intervention Zone. To be able to serve those who are unserved or underserved with internet connection.

The Veterans Administration is utilizing more internet based applications and/or telemedicine services. Having reliable and strong broadband aids in their health and well-being.

Our residents, veterans and their dependents deserve to have reliable broadband. It will aid all citizens in Winneshiek County with business, work and/or home life. This would be extremely beneficial to Winneshiek County.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Faith Hlubek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Faith Hlubek,
Administrator





WINNESHIK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Dan Marx

400 Claiborne Drive, Decorah, Iowa • Phone: 563-382-4268 • Fax: 563-382-2042

WinneshiekCounty.org/Sheriff • facebook.com/WinneshiekCountySheriff

March 17, 2023

Winneshiek County Supervisors
201 West Main Street
Decorah, Iowa 52101

Subject: Support for Winneshiek County Broadband Intervention Zone Status

Winneshiek County Supervisors:

I am writing in support of Winneshiek County being classified as a Broadband Intervention Zone for areas in the County that are unserved or underserved with internet service.

I live in Bluffton Township, along the bluffs of the Upper Iowa River. In my extended rural neighborhood, there are limited options for high-speed, reliable internet. Residents rely on satellite options with low success, often running out of data well before the month's end or experiencing disruptions in service due to weather conditions.

In my elected position of Winneshiek County Sheriff, I am responsible for the safety and security, and the protection of the constitutional rights, of the citizens of this county. In today's electronic/digital age, I am unavailable to them when at home due to low and/or absent service. It is common for me to have to pull service from my Sheriff's truck hotspot, and use the hotspots through our AT&T cell phones – the only carrier that works in our valley. My wife is the Public Information Officer for Winneshiek Medical Center, which is our county's hospital. Her role, and the fallout if she is unable to perform her duties in emergency situations, faces the same challenges as mine.

Additionally, the pandemic years highlighted the shortfall in internet service, as our children had to employ alternate means to complete their online school work, which regularly meant going to a classmate's house or our church to gain internet access. Beyond the pandemic, most classroom assignments, up to entire courses, are provided online. Lack of reliable service hinders the educational opportunities for our children. Also post pandemic, many adults have jobs that have transitioned from office buildings to working remotely from home. People working remotely need reliable internet service to provide for their families.

Mabel Cooperative Telephone services exist on the fringes of the Bluffton river valley. If Winneshiek County, and specifically the Bluffton area, is classified as a Broadband Intervention Zone and service is extended into the un/underserved regions, the people of Winneshiek County will be better served by those who are charged with their protection.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Marx".

Sheriff Dan Marx



Jayne Schultz

WINNESHIEK COUNTY RECORDER

201 West Main St.

Decorah, IA 52101

(563)-382-3486

jschultz@co.winneshiek.ia.us

March 15, 2023

Winneshiek County Supervisors

201 W. Main St.

Decorah IA 52101

Re: Support for Winneshiek County Broadband Intervention Zone Status

Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing in support of classifying Winneshiek County as a Broadband Intervention Zone. Reliable internet service has become a fundamental necessity to everyone's daily lives. As a rural resident myself, I am acutely aware of the downfalls of slow, unreliable internet service whether I am trying to access my bank account, or just pay my electric bill. As the County Recorder, I know how many services available to our county residents depend on reliable internet service. Our customers often come to our office to get information they could easily access from home with a decent internet connection. While we are certainly glad to help our customers, the real disadvantages our rural customers face because of unreliable internet access is obvious. The rural residents of Winneshiek County should not be left behind when we could be capable of providing this necessary service.

Please consider classifying Winneshiek County as a Broadband Intervention Zone.

Thank you,

Jayne Schultz

Winneshiek County Recorder



305 Montgomery Street, Suite #3
Decorah, IA 52101

March 14, 2023

Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors
201 W. Main
Decorah, IA 52101

Subject: Broadband Intervention Zone

Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing in support of Winneshiek County being designated as a Broadband Intervention Zone.

Our agency has home health clients scattered throughout the county. A new requirement for Managed Care Services will include Electronic Visit Verification, a tool to help reduce fraud and abuse. For our clients and our nursing, home care aide, and homemaker staff, this will mean staff will only need to document the services provided to these clients once—at the client's home. This service requires internet accessibility and some of our clients live in "dead" areas, places where there is no technology.

Our agency also services people needing access public health programming. We have the capability to accept emailed questions, on-line scheduling for appointments and have state and national links listed on our website. The availability of technology to access such programming is sometimes time critical and if all county residents have access to and availability of connectivity we can have a positive impact on promoting current and correct information to those in need. This can help to decrease misinformation—a leading cause of frustration.

We need to be equitable, ensuring residents have accessibility to the Broadband Intervention. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Krista M. Vanden Brink, RN, BA
Administrator

**COUNTY TREASURER'S OFFICE****WINNESHIEK COUNTY**

201 WEST MAIN STREET DECORAH, IOWA 52101 (563) 382-3753

BRENDA KREITZER, TREASURER*Deputies: Stacey Darling Nate Onsager
 Amanda Humpal Tim Smock
 Becky Steines*Email: bkreitzer@co.winneshiek.ia.usWebsites: www.iowatreasurers.org
www.winneshiekcounty.org

March 15, 2023

Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing in support of Winneshiek County being classified as a Broadband Intervention Zone for areas in the County that are unserved or underserved with internet service. Our residents deserve availability to use technology when interacting with local government just as residents in urban areas.

As a rural resident who lives in the Canoe Creek valley I share the frustration of being underserved. Also as the Winneshiek County Treasurer I feel rural residents should be able to access the services provided by our office equally with areas served. Through the County's website and the Treasurers website our customers have many online services including the convenience of paying their property taxes and renewing their motor vehicle registrations. We also have valuable resources listed on these websites for our county residents inquiring about Drivers License, Motor Vehicle and Property Tax. Rural residents should be able to access these resources equally with urban residents. The expansion of broadband internet to these areas could help facilitate equal access.

The classification of rural Winneshiek County as a Broadband Intervention Zone would be very beneficial to rural residents.

Thank you,

Brenda Kreitzer

Winneshiek County Treasurer

March 14, 2023

Winneshiek County Supervisors
201 West Main Street
Decorah, IA 52101

Subject: Support for Winneshiek County Broadband Intervention Zone status

Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors,

Internet is an important part of life for individuals of all ages; students use it for education, sick people use it to telecommunicate with medical professionals, to communicate with family and friends, etc. There are many families in Winneshiek County that have slow internet or no internet at all.

I live in rural Winneshiek County and work for Winneshiek County. Currently, my only option for internet is satellite internet and is extremely slow and unreliable. My slow, intermittent internet makes it hard for me to be productive and get things done efficiently when working from home.

I support Winneshiek County's application to be classified as a Broadband Intervention Zone for areas that are unserved or underserved with internet access.

Sincerely,



Lynne Bullerman

ENGINEER'S OFFICE

WINNESHIEK COUNTY

201 WEST MAIN STREET
DECORAH, IA 52101PHONE (563)382-2951
FAX (563) 387-3906LEE J. BJERKE, P.E.
County EngineerMICHAEL J. SHIMAK, PLS
County SurveyorISAAC WILTGEN, P.E.
Assistant County Engineer

March 14, 2023

Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors
201 W Main Street
Decorah, IA 52101


RE: Support for Winneshiek County Broadband Intervention Status

Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing in support of Winneshiek County being classified as a Broadband Intervention Zone for areas in the County that are unserved or underserved with respect to internet services. All residents of the county need the ability to interact with their local government and its officials via technology and internet.

Secondary Roads uses websites to disseminate information critical to the transportation and its direct impacts to those using the system. We also use it to receive and send specific requests, permits, and agreements between landowners, utilities, contractors and others. This designation would bolster efforts to improve communications with the more rural areas of the county.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.


Lee J. Bjerke, P.E.
Winneshiek County Engineer*Visit Exciting Winneshiek County*



Benjamin D. Steines
WINNESHIEK COUNTY AUDITOR and Commissioner of Elections

201 WEST MAIN STREET DECORAH, IOWA 52101 (563) 382-5085
bsteines@co.winneshiek.ia.us

March 14, 2023

Winneshiek County Supervisors
201 W Main St
Decorah, IA 52101

Subject: Support for Winneshiek County Broadband Intervention Zone status

Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing in support of Winneshiek County being classified as a Broadband Intervention Zone for areas in the County that are unserved or underserved with internet service. Our residents deserve availability to use technology when interacting with local government just as residents in urban areas.

Specifically, as County Auditor, we utilize the County's website to share election information such as sample ballots, applications for absentee ballots, and polling site information. We also disseminate information related to the County's budget and finances, contact information for elected officials, and the Board of Supervisors agendas and minutes. Rural residents should enjoy access to these resources just as urban residents do. Expansion of broadband internet to these areas could help facilitate equal access.

The classification of rural Winneshiek County as a Broadband Intervention Zone would be extremely beneficial to rural residents.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ben D Steines'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large 'S' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Benjamin D. Steines
Winneshiek County Auditor

**Winneshiek County Assessors Office**

March 14, 2023

Winneshiek County Supervisors
201 W Main
Decorah, IA 521001

Subject: Support for Winneshiek County Broadband Intervention Zone status

Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing in support of Winneshiek County being classified as a Broadband Intervention Zone for areas in the county that are underserved with internet service. Our residents deserve availability to modern technology like residents of larger communities.

As the Winneshiek County Assessor, we've developed essential communication and transparency through our beacon and county websites. Beacon is a tool where taxpayers can access vital assessment information about their properties. The county website is a critical tool for explaining the assessment process as well as other departments in the county. More importantly, our rural students would have the necessary tools for on-line education when needed.

I am highly supportive of expanding broadband internet in Winneshiek County.

Respectfully,

Jim Alstad
Winneshiek County Assessor

Board of Education**Ronald Fadness**, President**Cindy Goodner**, Vice President**John Hjelle****Brian Petersburg****Ben Lange****Dr. Tim Cronin**, Superintendent**Cathy Dietzenbach**, Business Manager**Darlene Woodhouse**, Board Secretary

Phone: (563) 382-4208 Fax: (563) 387-0753 - www.decorah.k12.ia.us 510 Winnebago Street Decorah, Iowa 52101-1842

March 24, 2023,

To whom it may concern:

We are writing to voice our support of Winneshiek County Supervisors as they work to provide fiber to the home internet service in Winneshiek County - Iowa. Unfortunately, there are currently few internet options available in our area, and of the available options, the data speeds could be much higher. To complicate matters, the cell phone service in many parts of the county could be better, meaning that most rural areas have no digital connectivity.

As a School District in Winneshiek County, we can attest to the hardship of lack of service. Our children are not able to participate in distance learning, and they are not able to fill out online applications for college scholarships.

Access to fast & reliable internet is no longer an amenity but a necessity. It will not only enhance the quality of life in the community but also serve as an avenue to connect us with the digital resources we are now missing.

We strongly encourage you to approve the grant request that Winneshiek County Supervisors have submitted on behalf of the residents of Winneshiek County.

Thank you,

Tim Cronin

District Superintendent

(563) 382-4208

tim.cronin@decorah.k12.ia.us

Shawn Gordon

Director of Technology and Information

(563) 382-4208

shawn.gordon@decorah.k12.ia.us