



March 30, 2023

To: Office of the Chief Information Officer  
From: John McCurdy, Executive Director Southwest Iowa Planning Council  
RE: Fremont County Broadband

To whom it may concern,


I am writing in full throated support for increased investment in broadband infrastructure throughout all of Fremont County. Based on the OCIO mapping tool we have identified three distinct areas of need and this makes sense within the scope of this request for areas of interest—though in reality the need in Fremont County is fairly countywide and therefore this letter of support is meant to cover all the underserved areas. (The bright spot in the county of course is Farragut area which has put in fiber, and hopefully can act as a springboard for future investment.)

SWIPCO is charged with writing a comprehensive economic development strategy plan every five years for a six county region in southwest Iowa, including Fremont County. Because of the Floods of 2019 and the Covid-19 Pandemic we have done an update to that plan mid-cycle. Connectivity to modern broadband speeds is absolutely critical to business retention and recruitment. Many businesses in Fremont County are family owned and connected to the land—such as cattle operations or multi-generational brick and mortar firms. These businesses and residents do not want to move. But, as the testimonials that are included (and the many unwritten testimonials) attest without broadband connectivity people and businesses are leaving for places where they can do business with the outside world. No one can blame them.

Since the Floods of 2019 SWIPCO has helped facilitate more than \$75 million in grant investment in Fremont County. This includes demolishing flood ravaged homes, building new levees, wells, and now new homes. These investments of vital state and federal funds will be **wasted** if the broadband infrastructure in the county is not similarly improved.

Please select Fremont County for future broadband investment, soon!

Sincerely,

  
John P. McCurdy, AICP  
Executive Director



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Chris Clark  
Fremont County Supervisor  
506 Filmore St  
Sidney, IA 51652

March 28, 2023

To the Office of the Chief Information Officer of the State of Iowa:

Fremont County is submitting this application in response to the OCIO Invitation to Qualify for Broadband Intervention Zone. As identified in the Geographic Area of Selection Tool, Fremont County has many areas that are underserved and eligible for the ITQ. Fremont County has identified a 4-mile radius circle centered on 2516 130<sup>th</sup> St. Tabor, IA 51653. This includes the towns of Tabor and Thurman. This is 23 unserved locations and 51 underserved locations. These are necessary areas for the Broadband Intervention Zone. These areas are served by only two providers CenturyLink, Inc. which is DSL, and Midwest Data Center which is cable. These speeds are not the necessary 100/20 minimum for healthy connectivity. This ITQ application is a chance for these to be considered as areas of concern for an Intervention Zone. We would like to be considered in this round of the broadband application program so that we can provide adequate internet access and connectivity to our citizens. The Fremont County Board of Supervisors commits to supporting broadband expansion throughout the county within its powers, including such in-kind assistance as allowing space within the County right of way for new fiber optic installations.

Sincerely,

Chris Clark  
Fremont County Supervisor  
(712) 374-2031

As a lifelong resident of Fremont County, I love where I live. However, I have seen the best and the worst of rural life.

Fremont County was honored to be the second county in Iowa to be selected to participate in Keep Iowa Beautiful's Hometown Pride program. As we organized not only our community groups, but as a county organization, we were able to identify the most needed improvements countywide. At the very top of the list was the need for high speed internet access. Not only to attract new businesses and improve our lives, but to enable and encourage our youth to see Fremont County as a progressive place to stay and raise their own families.

Due to a health condition, our adult son and family moved from Colorado and lived with us for several months. As a respected civil engineer for his company, they gave him approval to work remotely. Our internet was so slow he had to seek access elsewhere to upload files or work online. As soon as possible, they moved to the Des Moines area where he could work from home. I truly believe with high speed internet, more of our youth would be able to return to their roots and enjoy our rural life.

Our schools trying to teach remotely during the Covid 19 pandemic has shown us even more how necessary this utility is to our future. Hit hard by flooding in 2019, Fremont County is still struggling to meet its needs in repairing roads and other infrastructure, leaving little in funding for the extras.

My only home access to the internet is through a satellite connection at \$80 a month. When I upgraded to the latest technology just a year ago, they assured me a faster connection. On a typical weekday this month, a speed test revealed my download speed at 8:30 AM was 49 Mbps. Not bad I thought. By 3:30 PM it was down to 3.1 Mbps and at 8:30 PM it was down to an unusable 1.7 Mbps download speed and zero for upload speed. This was with only one device connected to our wi-fi.

There are many families in Fremont County waiting for high speed access. Please consider us for this grant and bring us into the technological future!

Susan Shepherd  
Fremont-Mills School Tech Coordinator, retired  
Tabor Hometown Pride President  
2516 130<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tabor, Iowa 51653