

Broadband Grant Program – Empower Rural Iowa  
Empower Rural Iowa Emergency Broadband Expansion Program (NOFA #005)  
Application 395900 – Hastings IA  
Central Forms  
Supplemental Materials of Need  
List of Support Letters Included in This Document

1. Letters of support
  - a. City of Hastings
  - b. Mills County Board of Supervisors
  - c. Mills County Economic Development
  - d. State Representative David Sieck, Iowa House of Representatives, District 23
  - e. State Senator Mark Costello, Iowa Senate, District 12
  - f. Glenwood Area Chamber of Commerce
  - g. Mills County Farm Bureau
  - h. Jim Hughes Real Estate Agency
  - i. HR Green, Inc.

February 16, 2021

State of Iowa, Office of the Chief Information Officer  
Attn: Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant Program – Review Committee  
Hoover State Office B  
1305 E. Walnut  
Des Moines, IA 50319

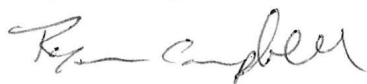
Dear Review Committee Members:

The City of Hastings is sending this letter in support of a funding request for a proposed fiber optic construction project in Hastings, Iowa, being submitted by BTC, Inc., d/b/a Western Iowa Networks (WIN). This project is important to small rural communities like Hastings because we need the competitive edge and economic advantage which broadband delivers. WIN is willing to invest in the future of Hastings by building this broadband network.

Please give this request your full consideration. Broadband is a critical asset Hastings needs to be a competitive player in attracting and retaining businesses and residents in our small rural community. WIN is an important partner in helping us expand and attract economic opportunities for rural Iowa. Thank you very much for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

City of Hastings

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Campbell", is written over the printed name of the City of Hastings.



*Mills County*

# Mills County Board of Supervisors

*Richard Crouch · Carol Vinton · Lonnie Mayberry*

Mills County Courthouse • 418 Sharp Street • Glenwood, IA 51534

Phone: (712) 527-4729 • Fax: (712) 527-1579 • Website: [www.millscountyiowa.gov](http://www.millscountyiowa.gov)

February 24, 2021

State of Iowa  
Office of the Chief Information Officer  
200 E. Grand Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50309

RE: Letter of Support for Grant Application NOFA#5

Dear Grant Program Review Committee,

We are writing to express our support for Western Iowa Network's grant request for a broadband grant in NOFA#5 within Mills County, Iowa.

Mills County Board of Supervisors and citizens are united in recognizing the significant needs for and better broadband in our County. In an effort to better understand the broadband challenges, the Mills County Board of Supervisors through the Mills County Economic Development Foundation completed a Broadband Study in October of 2018. In the study, the County discovered there are serious broadband service limitations in the County that are not represented correctly on current broadband maps.

Western Iowa Networks has been a very good partner in taking steps to improve broadband in Mills County. WIN has invested in some broadband infrastructure in Mills County, but there is considerably more need for broadband connectivity. This NOFA#5 grant will keep steps moving to continue to bring connectivity to people who currently need it.

The County has taken important steps to make improvements for the citizens of Mills County. Economic Development efforts have been strong and focused on bringing significant investment and business partners to the County. Particularly with the struggles the County has had with flooding, this is an important time to look forward and make Mills County stronger. We see this access to broadband grants as a significant factor in making this happen.

We ask you to approve Western Iowa Network's broadband infrastructure grant application and ask you to approve it. We look forward to Western Iowa Networks continuing to make broadband more accessible in Mills County.

Sincerely,

Mills County Board of Supervisors

**MILLS COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

State of Iowa  
Office of the Chief Information Officer  
200 E. Grand Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50309

February 19, 2021

Dear Annette Dunns,

The Mills County Economic Development Foundation is excited to offer support to Western Iowa Networks for the Empower Rural Iowa Emergency Broadband Expansion Program (NOFA #005). Broadband expansion is fundamental to our mission of improving long-term economic sustainability in Mills County and ensuring a prosperous place to live, work and do business in western-Iowa.

Concerned about the state of broadband and telecommunications in the county, Mills County procured a rural broadband study conducted by the engineering firm, HR Green. The 2018 study reported that Mills County was underserved with large areas of the county lacking adequate broadband service. Currently, Glenwood ranks as the 530<sup>th</sup> most connected city in Iowa and approximately 2,000 people in Mills County do not have access to any wired internet, while fiber optic internet is available to just 8% if Mills County residents.

Mills County's large labor-shed within the Greater Omaha Metropolitan Statistical Area and proximity to Interstate-29 and multiple rail lines positions Mills County well for future economic development. Greater broadband in Mills County is needed to attract new businesses and retain the firms currently located in the county. The digital landscape and growing reliance on internet of things (IoT) based technology in supporting agriculture, logistics, manufacturing, and office operations hinges on reliable and accessible broadband.

Western Iowa Networks is committed to expanding their services in Mills County and the Rural Broadband Expansion Program will assist Western Iowa Network's growth in offering broadband to some of the 2,000 residents and businesses without broadband. Western Iowa Networks is a local partner with a proven track record of getting work done on time and in an efficient manner. Their past work with NOFA broadband grants has been pivotal in Mills County economic development by providing essential services to households, businesses, and emergency responders operating in the county today.

The county and our business community partners are grateful for the opportunity to apply for these broadband funds and appreciate the State of Iowa considering Western Iowa Network's projects in Mills County. The funding has strong support across the county and there is dedicated plan in place to ensure the funds will be spent in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marco Floreani".

Marco Floreani  
Executive Director, Economic Development

**David Sieck**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

*Twenty-Third District*

Statehouse: (515) 281-3221

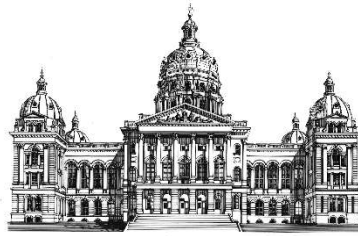
e-mail – david.sieck@legis.iowa.gov

HOME ADDRESS

1710 Timber Lane

Glenwood, Iowa 51534

Phone: 712-527-9809



House of Representatives

State of Iowa

*Eighty-Ninth General Assembly*

STATEHOUSE

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

**COMMITTEES**

Information & Technology, *Vice Chair*

Agriculture

Economic Growth

Ways & Means

February 20, 2021

State of Iowa

Office of the Chief Information Officer

200 E. Grand Ave.

Des Moines, IA 50309

RE: Letter of Support for Grant Application of Western Iowa Networks

To Whom it May Concern:

As the representing member of the Iowa House of Representatives for House District 23, I am sending this letter in support of the broadband grant application submitted by Western Iowa Networks for the construction of a fiber network in Hastings. This small town has been devastated by flooding, loss of housing and is in decline. This is an area that is off of a major highway and has huge potential to grow, but is currently being restricted by the absence of reliable internet. The pandemic has also put greater emphasis on just how important quality internet access is in keeping this town relevant and giving it potential to survive its hardships. Access to these services has never been more critical than it is now. The ability to tele-work, distance learn, or have access to tele-health services depends heavily on a fast and stable broadband network. The fiber optic network proposed by Western Iowa Networks will allow my constituents to access these critical services for years to come.

I strongly encourage you to please consider the application of Western Iowa Networks for this grant award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David Sieck'.

*David Sieck*

State Representative

Iowa House District 23

Serving Mills, Fremont & Montgomery Counties

February 15, 2021

Office of the Chief Information Officer of the State of Iowa  
Hoover State Office Building, Level B  
1305 E. Walnut Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319

RE: Empower Rural Iowa – Broadband Grant Program

Dear Chief Information Officer Annette Dunn and Review Committee:

I am writing this letter on behalf of BTC, Inc., dba Western Iowa Networks. I would like to express my full support of the Empower Rural Iowa broadband grant application for Western Iowa Networks. With the assistance of this grant, Western Iowa Networks' expanded broadband network will enable us to overcome geographical distances, empower us through information, and bring the world to us through the touch of a keyboard. As an unserved rural area with limited availability to advanced Internet services, we face many challenges including limited medical resources and distance between patients, physicians, specialists and facilities. Because of the rural nature of our area, our students do not receive equitable broadband resources as other students in more urban learning centers. Our community currently lacks the research; distance learning, video and other tools that advanced broadband can bring to a rural school. Therefore, it is extremely important that broadband grant funding be obtained to provide much needed broadband service to our area.

Western Iowa Networks has a long and successful history of providing state-of-art broadband service at advanced speeds to other rural communities and has a strong reputation for community commitment and customer service, we are confident in their capabilities of enhancing broadband service for the Hastings and Glenwood areas.

Sincerely,



Mark Costello  
Iowa State Senate District 12

37265 Rains Ave  
Imogene, IA 51645  
(712) 520-0303





Connecting People, Growing Business

State of Iowa, Office  
of the Chief Information Officer  
Attn: Empower Rural  
Iowa Broadband Grant Review Committee  
Hoover State Office B  
1305 E. Walnut  
Des Moines, IA  
50319

To Whom This May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of Western Iowa Networks application for the Broadband Grants. As the Executive Director of the Glenwood Area Chamber of Commerce, we work closely with businesses and individuals across all of Mills County, and one the top five concerns we hear about is connectivity. For many of entrepreneurs in our area, they start their businesses within their homes. Unfortunately, many homes within Mills County don't have access to the level of connectivity that is found within cities. Given the current conditions of our world, we are seeing more families struggling to piece together internet that supports not only working from home, but also their children attending school at home.

Western Iowa Networks is a proven partner in bringing that connectivity to homes and businesses. By awarding them this Broadband Grant, you are not only investing in a company that truly cares about the people they provide to, but also you will be supporting and furthering economic growth and vitality within Southwest Iowa.

Rachel Reis  
Executive Director  
director@glenwoodia.com

#### **Chamber Staff and Volunteers**

Tana Saddler - Events and Communication Manager  
Suzanne Tuma- Volunteer Chamber Ambassador

#### **Your 2019 Board of Directors**

Aaron Smith- McDonalds  
Diana Hoogestraat- Community Advocate  
Jim Henderson- Black Hills Energy  
Julianne Marriot- Glen Haven  
Kathy Reisner- Glenwood State Bank  
Nicki Poort- Malvern Bank  
Ramsay AhSam- Sacrilegious Ciderworks/Vine Street Cellars  
Spencer Williams- KMA Broadcasting



February 23, 2021

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter, as President of the Mills County Farm Bureau Board of Directors, in support of Western Iowa Networks grant application to install new broadband internet infrastructure in Mills County. Mills County Farm Bureau along with Iowa Farm Bureau have established current policy advocating for the expansion and improvement of broadband internet service in rural Iowa.

Farmers in Mills County are seeing an increased need for broadband connection for us to maintain our day to day activities on the farm and at our homes. Currently, broadband in a significant part of rural Mills County is problematic and connectivity, along with speed is lacking for our farmers. An example would be, many of our residents in rural areas are only able to connect to the internet through satellite.

Farmers are being impacted as we are unable to utilize some of the technology used in modern farming. With the ever-evolving state of our farms, this is of the utmost importance. With improved broadband internet connection and service, we would be able to use our equipment, technology and skills to be even more productive than we already are accomplishing.

We do understand there are a few fiber lines on the edges of our county, but a great majority of our rural areas are underserved. With the current situation we are facing with Covid-19, this greatly affects our children's' ability to access the internet and effectively complete schoolwork and learn from a virtual setting. It also affects our residents who have been shifted from a work environment in an office to one where they work from a home office.

I once again ask you to strongly consider the grant application from Western Iowa Networks to install broadband internet in rural Mills County.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Curt Frazee'.

Curt Frazee, President

Mills County Farm Bureau Board of Directors





## Jim Hughes Real Estate, LLC

Homes • Acreages • Farms  
[www.jimhughesrealestate.com](http://www.jimhughesrealestate.com)

410 South Locust  
P.O. Box 111  
Glenwood, Iowa 51534  
Phone: (712) 527-3114  
FAX: (712) 527-5496

State of Iowa, Office of the Chief Information Officer  
Attn: Iowa Broadband Grant Program-Review Committee  
Hoover State Office B  
1305 E. Walnut  
Des Moines, IA 50319

RE: Letter of Support for Grant Application

To whom it may concern:

Jim Hughes Real Estate would like to offer strong support for the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband grant being submitted by Western Iowa Networks for the construction of a fiber network in rural southwest Iowa. This project will be extremely beneficial to our rural communities. This is greatly important as more and more people are working from home.

Our company is actively involved in the development and sale of real estate in Southwest Iowa, and we can confirm firsthand how important Broadband service is to this area. The presence of reliable broadband service is becoming more and more important for prospective homebuyers all the time. Having access to quality broadband service, especially fiber, can increase home values and make it easier to attract and retain homeowners in a given area. In many areas of Southwest Iowa, such as many rural subdivisions and small towns, this type of service is lacking, and the approval of this application would be a good step toward making broadband service more accessible.

We ask you to seriously consider awarding Western Iowa Network the grant funds they are requesting for this project.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anne Steele".

Anne Steele

Jim Hughes Real Estate, Board of Directors

February 23, 2021

State of Iowa  
Office of the Chief Information Officer  
200 E. Grand Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50309

RE: Letter of Support for NOFA#5 Grant Application

Dear Grant Program Review Committee,

Western Iowa Networks is an important partner for Mills County in bringing better broadband to the County. As they are applying for NOFA#5 funding, we express our strong support for their grant application.

Mills County needs better broadband. There are two contexts in which we ask you to approve this grant. First, HR Green is an Iowa based engineering firm with a fiber and broadband practice. In October of 2018, the Mills County Board of Supervisors, through the Mills County Economic Development Foundation, engaged HR Green to conduct a broadband study. Our first step in the study was to look at industry data from the FCC maps. It appeared that there was decent coverage in Mills County. But, as we analyzed the data more deeply and received feedback from stakeholders and citizens, we found that in most of the County, broadband coverage was very poor. Very large sections of the County can only get satellite connectivity. And, the County IT Department was so concerned about connectivity that they used software to track connectivity of emergency personnel, producing maps that show large areas in which emergency response have no mode of communication. The study showed clearly that connectivity is an ongoing issue in the County. We have attached the study for your reference.

Second, on a personal note and as a case-in-point, I live in Mills County on highway 34 just east of Mills County's largest city, Glenwood. Although some maps available show good coverage in our County and even in my area, my only option for connectivity is satellite. And, the satellite coverage is problematic.

We ask you to approve Western Iowa Network's NOFA#5 grant application. They have been a good partner for the County in taking steps to improve broadband. Approving this grant would help them continue to expand good broadband – into the rural parts of the County that desperately need it.

Sincerely,  
Ken Demlow  
Project Manager,  
HR Green Fiber and Broadband Services  
[kdemlow@hrgreen.com](mailto:kdemlow@hrgreen.com)  
(712)355-1067