



July 27, 2021

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

Dear Annette Dunn,

Grow Cedar Valley is excited to offer support to Cedar Falls Utilities application for the Empower Rural Iowa Emergency Broadband Expansion Program. Fundamentally, this aligns with what Grow Cedar Valley and our partners efforts in the region to create a destination place to live and work in northeast Iowa.

This fiber to the premise project would allow needed high reliable and high capacity internet options to our rural area to better serve businesses, farmers, and residents in the potential service area. The growing reliance on the internet of things (IoT) affects every sector and our regional competitiveness to attract and retain talent and businesses.

Cedar Falls Utilities fiber service has proved that they can quickly and inexpensively increase internet speed to keep ahead of customer need since the install of fiber to the premise in the City of Cedar Falls over six years ago. We anticipate the proposed service area CFU is proposing will realize the same.

Cedar Falls Utilities has been a good steward of resources as a community-owned broadband network provider. Last year, PC Magazine named Cedar Falls Utilities named CFU the fastest internet service provider in the country, beating out larger providers across the United States.



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On behalf of Grow Cedar Valley, we look forward to your favorable review of Cedar Falls Utilities proposed project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Rivera Skubal".

Lisa Rivera Skubal, CEcD
Vice President of Economic Development

c: Cary Darrah, President/CEO – Grow Cedar Valley



July, 2021

32045 Willow Ave
New Hartford, IA 50660

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 Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant

To whom it may concern:

I would like to offer strong support for the current Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant being submitted by Cedar Falls Utilities for the construction of a fiber network in rural areas north and west of Cedar Falls. I operate a consulting business and my wife and I work on our family farm. Internet access has always been a challenge and has lagged significantly to what is available to residents in larger Iowa cities. Even today internet access is slow at best and not reliable.

My wife and I have raised five children and they all now reside in large metropolitan areas. The recent pandemic has resulted in allowing many professionals to work from home and students to be educated remotely. Like many others we would like to see our children and grandchildren and other young families move to a rural setting. In visiting with them and their friends the lack of access to reliable high-capacity fiber presents a severe impediment from this happening. These young adults and new parents who grew up in a rural setting experienced an internet access disadvantage when it came to school work and learning and that is a concern now for their children if they were to move.

I also spent many years serving students in Iowa public schools including as President of Hawkeye Community College. I can attest to the additional challenges and the disadvantages experienced by those students who did not have the same access as their counterparts to the reliable internet services.

Having access to quality broadband service, especially fiber, can level the playing field for rural residents, be they students, employees working from home or small business owners. This type of service is sorely lacking and approval of this application would be a major step in making this service more accessible and affordable. I ask you to approve Cedar Falls Utilities with the award for the grant funds it is requesting for this project.

Sincerely,

Greg Schmitz





Dike-New Hartford Community School District

330 Main Street- P.O. Box D - Dike, IA 50624-0633

Central Office 319-989-2552 FAX 319-989-2735	Dike Elementary Office 319-989-2487 FAX 319-989-2723	New Hartford Elementary/Junior High Office 319-983-2206 FAX 319-983-2207	High School Office 319-989-2485 FAX 319-989-2735
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7/27/21

To: 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

From: Justin Stockdale
Superintendent
Dike-New Hartford Community Schools

RE: Letter of Support for Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant

The Dike-New Hartford School District would like to offer strong support for the current Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant being submitted by Cedar Falls Utilities for the construction of a fiber network in rural northeast Iowa. This project will be beneficial for our rural communities and is needed more than ever with more people working from home and students learning online.

For many years the District has provided every student PK-12, as well as faculty with computer hardware and software to improve teaching and learning. One of our biggest impediments to remote learning is lack of reliable service in the rural areas and lack of high capacity service in both the rural areas and in the small communities in the District. While this lack of service for our students and faculty has been greatly exacerbated as a result of the pandemic the need will be more critical for future learning and lack of fiber will only continue to increase the digital divide.

Having access to quality broadband service, especially fiber, can level the playing field for students in smaller Iowa school districts such as Dike-New Hartford. This type of service is sorely lacking and approval of this application would be a major step in making this service more accessible and affordable. We ask you to approve Cedar Falls Utilities with the award for the grant funds it is requesting for this project.

If further conversation or information is needed please feel free to contact me on my cell phone at (319) 415-0627.

13011 University Ave.
Cedar Falls, IA, 50613

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

July 27, 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing on behalf of the Cedar Falls Utilities and their efforts to promote fiber out to the rural areas of Cedar Falls. I currently live on a farm outside. When we first moved there to take over the family farm, we had no internet access. At that time, CFU was working hard to get the wireless out to the farm, which we were able to access after about a year or so. It didn't seem fair that our children had to go to town to access internet to get school work completed. My husband and I also had to do the same with our work. We had grown accustomed to the great fiber system that CFU provided in town and used it for work and school. Having no access at first was difficult. So we were grateful that we had some access to internet when the wireless came out to the farm. Although it was not nearly as reliable or fast as the fiber, we were grateful to not be left in the stone age.

Times have changed. The wireless has not been as reliable, especially during the pandemic year. I am a school principal. We were using Zoom to teach, have meetings, connect, etc. There were times when my children coming home from college, my husband trying to run a farm and his own sales agency, and myself as a principal trying to run a school, were all on Zoom at the same time or accessing the internet for school or work. Often one of us would get bumped off, because this did not allow capacity that we needed or it would slow down. I asked for special permission for myself to go back to work to Zoom to help out, but no family members were permitted inside my school building. Even being sent videos to view for college and work were difficult, often being choppy if too many of us were on the wireless at the same time. Those were often required viewings for my college aged students or for myself and husband for work. Having fiber brought out to us would be a tremendous benefit for work and for personal use. Those of us who live out in the country due to farming or personal desire should not be left out of the huge benefits of having a fiber optic network. We would support Cedar Falls Utilities in their efforts to apply for a grant that would allow fiber to come out to our family farm. There are neighbors close by who would also benefit, including a sod farm business a half mile down the gravel road from us and other families who have school aged children. Please help us access the benefits of having fiber in the rural community. CFU is willing to do this for us with help from this grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kim K. Cross". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kim" and last name "Cross" clearly distinguishable.

Kim K, Cross, elementary principal and rural resident

13011 University Ave.
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

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

July 27, 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing on behalf of Cedar Falls Utilities (CFU) and their efforts to expand fiber capability to the rural customers/areas of Cedar Falls. I run a 3rd generation family farmer and have a sales business from our family home. When we first moved back to the family farm, we had only dial up internet capability through a hot-spot. Before our move, we had internet access through "in-town" fiber of CFU. When we moved, we realized we were in trouble to do our business and raise our young children. The internet had become as important as electricity. When CFU first added Wireless (dish) internet service, we were thrilled to go from dial-up to this small dish. The internet speeds were vastly improved, allowing us to run our business and access the internet for our children's education. Not great – but much better.

Fast forward to today – the requirement for greater speed from our internet connection exceeds CFU's dish internet current capacity/capability. We live in the world of Zoom meetings, training meetings, on-line extension meetings, commodity markets, We often get bumped off the dish or have a "down" internet due to the high customer volume of the current dish service. Currently, we are often having to resort to using our cell phones as the current dish internet service is lacking.

Investing in the future of rural Iowa is very important to the future growth of Iowa and the smaller communities. The expansion of Fiber Service to the rural customers would put our businesses and our families on a more level playing field with our urban neighbors. Like having Electricity brought to the farms many decades ago, the need for fast broadband/fiber internet access is equally important. We believe the need for more internet access and capability will grow in the years ahead. We want to live in rural Iowa and feel the investment in broadband/fiber will pay huge dividends for Iowa!!

I run a marketing business which services the greater Midwest for Bertch Cabinets from my home. We have over 13 people employed and help manage \$45+ million in sales through our company. The need for communication is critical to our continued growth and success. Zoom meetings have become the norm and we believe we will be doing even more internet meetings and training sessions in the months ahead. Expanding Fiber capabilities will allow rural Iowa to grow and prosper.

Thank in advance for your review and willingness to invest in Iowa's future.

Enthusiastically,

Chris Hansen
(Rural Resident)
CP Hansen Farm, LLC and Adams Sales Group, LLC

July 25, 2021

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

I would like to encourage the State of Iowa to consider the Cedar Falls Utilities application to build fiber out to Cedar Falls rural areas. We have lived in our rural Cedar Falls home since 2001 and have really struggled with fast and reliable internet service. It has been such a struggle for us that in July of 2017 I wrote my Master of Public Policy Thesis on the topic of Digital Disparities, looking at the growing digital divide for rural citizens who lack access to fast and reliable internet. I worked in the Information Technology industry for 24 years and now run an Amazon and Ebay business out of our home. My wife works as a professor at the University of Northern Iowa. We desperately need the speed and reliability CFU offers with their fiber connections.

We have been through every phase of internet service available to most rural Iowans. We started with modems, then dual modems, ISDN to DSL, Satellite Internet, then wireless point to point. We are currently enrolled in the Starlink by SpaceX Beta Satellite Internet program. Every step of the way we've had issues with speed or reliability. Our current Starlink satellite internet has been great for speed, but it has many, many disruptions in service due to dropping satellite coverage. I've now also learned that this program, once out of beta, may add data caps to its service and Starlink will also suffer from satellite drops for years to come as they continue to launch new satellites. This causes disruptions for us in WiFi phone calling, as we live at the edge of cellular coverage, in Zoom calls which drop all the time, causing disruption to my wife's work meetings; in our children's remote school (during Covid lockdown); and when we try to use the internet for our children's remote Zoom/Facetime piano and drum lessons.

We've spent many unnecessary hours driving in to our offices at work in town over the years or going to my in-laws house to use the internet when ours would not work, wasn't fast enough, or wasn't reliable enough. We spend a lot of time with delayed computer updates, because they have to run overnight to not interfere with our daily work. My wife has spent numerous nights

recording video lectures in an empty classroom at UNI because our upload speeds couldn't handle the uploads needed for her recorded lectures.

Most of our Cedar Falls friends wouldn't even consider moving into rural Iowa, just a few miles from the city limits, because the internet they need on a daily basis is not provided in rural areas. They have come to rely on the amazing speeds, low latency and fantastic reliability Cedar Falls Utilities offers to in-town residents through their fiber network. We would absolutely love to have that same service in our rural Iowa home. CFU Fiber would improve our lives and the livability of rural Iowa. Cedar Falls Utilities sounds eager and ready to provide that service, we need your help to approve their application.

SINCERELY,

MARK A. DOBIE