

Mitchell County Board of Supervisors
Mitchell County Court House
212 South 5th St.
Osage, IA 50461

July 14, 2021

Iowa Office of the Chief Information Officer
c/o Broadband Grants Program Administrator
200 E Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA 50309

RE: Letter of Support for NOFA Number 006 409811 – Broadband Grant Program – Empower Rural Iowa
– Osage Municipal Utilities

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to communicate the Board of Supervisors support for an application being submitted by Osage Municipal Utilities (OMU) to develop new Broadband service to the city of Orchard and other residents in close proximity to that town.

The Board of Supervisors focus on economic development and see that companies in our region struggle with a limited supply of workers. Broadband connectivity is a barrier to job growth in our county and must be addressed. A number of employers continually experience difficulty in hiring new employees. This problem ranges from small to large businesses. RR Donnelley, Grain Millers, Wold Rim and Wheel, A to Z Drying, Falk Construction, Milk House Candles, Valent Biosciences, and Fox River Mills are some of our larger businesses that have called-out the problem that Broadband connectivity for their existing employees is very limited not only in rural areas but also small towns with-in Mitchell County. This is not only a problem for existing residents, but for all Mitchell County businesses when attempting to attract new residents to work and live in our county. All school districts in Mitchell County have mentioned the need for adequate Broadband. Today's learning environment requires this to properly educate students in rural areas and small towns. Families are hesitant to move to a rural area without proper Broadband service.

OMU has been the main internet service provider to Osage for a number of years. OMU has had a commitment to expand this service to encompass as much of the Osage Community School District as practical. The small towns of Mitchell and Orchard are with-in this school district. Broadband construction to the town of Mitchell is nearing completion, and it is OMU's goal for the town of Orchard to be included to the OMU service provider network.

Providing Broadband in Orchard (and Mitchell County) is important to the Mitchell County Board of Supervisors. We are committed to promoting this proposed project. We encourage funding of this application due to the high level of need for Broadband in Mitchell County. This Broadband project will not only support our current workforce but aid our commercial/industrial businesses with any future expansions. Adequate Broadband is also vital to the education of our youth in today's society. This is a direct positive impact to economic development.

Thank You for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mitchell County Board of Supervisors



Mitchell County EDC

509 State St.

Osage, IA 50461

641.732.4790

641.732.4790-fax

mcedc@mitchellcoia.us

www.mitchellcountya.com

July 16, 2021

To whom it may concern,

I would like to give the complete support and recommendation of the Mitchell County Economic Development Commission for the approval of the grant being submitted by Osage Municipal Utilities. This grant would greatly help bring the residents of Orchard the internet access that will allow them to grow in the digital economy. It will also allow for broadband to be provided to the Mitchell County Economic Development Corporation certified site.

The goal of this site is to recruit and retain a major industrial customer. This unique site will have access to rail and natural gas. The fiber connectivity at this stie will complete all the infrastructure we need to make this an appealing location for a major industrial customer.

Please consider OMU for your grant approval and help Mitchell County grow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sheri Penney".

Sheri Penney

Executive Director

Mitchell County Economic Development Commission

Kyle Hobbs- Mayor City of Orchard

P.O. Box 115
Orchard, Iowa 50460
(641)420-7404
cityoforchard@gmail.com

July 14th, 2021

Brandon R. Halsne

Osage Municipal Utilities
720 Chestnut St.
Osage, Iowa 50461

Dear Mr. Halsne

This letter is in support of the State of Iowa grant that Osage Municipal Utilities is currently applying for the Orchard Fiber Optic project. Our community is 100% supportive of this project. We have school aged children in our community that rely on dependable internet because they are required to do school work at home a good amount of the time. We also have about 3-4 business in town that are depended on the use of reliable internet to do there daily tasks and make payment for the jobs that are done at there business, in which they have a hard time getting access to the internet depending on where their business is in town. We currently have a system on top of a grain elevator leg, which sends a signal to dishes that are on our houses put on by OMU. There are a lot of days depending on the weather and depending on the time of year the service is pretty sketchy, which makes it hard for anyone to get a good internet signal.

A lot of families in our town stream a lot of their programs on their T.V.'s and computers and there are a lot of times they don't get the picture quality or internet strength to get their programs to load. I know as a city itself we do a lot of our city reports and programs online and it is difficult to get a good enough signal to get the reports or programs processed in a timely manner.

I think looking towards the future, having Fiber Optic in our community would be a great game changer for growth in our community.

Sincerely,

Kyle Hobbs

Mayor-City of Orchard Iowa

