

Section 2.2.4 – Demonstrated Experience

NEIT Services, LLC (NEIT) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Northeast Iowa Telephone Company, and is based in Monona, IA. NEIT, established in 1903, has a long history of providing high quality wireline voice, wireless voice, Internet and video services to residents in Northeast Iowa and Southwest Wisconsin. NEIT is and has always been committed to customer service and providing the latest communications services available to meet customer needs. NEIT is a shareholder owned company, based in Northeast Iowa and managed by a board of nine directors. A substantial number of shareholders live within NEIT's service territory and the Company is a significant employer in Clayton County, IA.

NEIT currently employs a staff of twenty-four full-time employees. NEIT staff will utilize a wealth of knowledge to ensure the success of its proposed Rural Postville 1 Gbps And Beyond Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) Expansion (Secondary) project. Staff directly involved with the proposed project will include four full-time customer service staff, six full-time trained FTTH technicians, and four senior key management employees. The senior managers include David Byers - Secretary/COO, Steve Hanson - Director of Business Development, Charlie Roys – Outside Plant Manager, and Dave Lund – Network Manager. Combined, this management team has over 90 years of experience in building, operating and maintaining communications networks. When outside assistance is necessary, NEIT has long-term relationships in place with numerous highly experienced telecommunications consultants and contractors, such as Central Cable Contractors, Mid-States Consulting Engineers, Olsen Thielen & Co., and John Staurulakis Inc.

The proposed FTTH network is designed as an Active Ethernet FTTH network. This means that the path from NEIT's Central Office equipment to the customer is never shared – service is delivered to each location with one or more dedicated strands of Fiber. NEIT has selected an access equipment vendor (AdTran) that has a consistent history of upgrading their product offerings as technology develops. Because of these design characteristics, NEIT will be able to easily upgrade the proposed network to offer speeds faster than 1 Gbps in the future. Should customers demand speeds of 10 Gbps or higher as technology is developed, the proposed network is designed such that the cable plant will support those needs and only the electronics will need to be upgraded.

NEIT constructed its first FTTH network in 2010, and since then has expanded its FTTH network to 100% of the locations within its ILEC exchanges; Monona/Luana (563-539), Farmersburg (563-536), and Saint Olaf (563-783). In addition to its ILEC territory, in 2016 NEIT expanded its network by adding CLEC FTTH service within the City of Postville (563-863/864). Thanks to funding provided via Iowa OCIO NOFA #003, NEIT was able to make its first FTTH network expansion into rural Postville and Luana in 2020. Every mile of NEIT's wireline network in operation today is Fiber-to-the-Home. NEIT provides Broadband service to approximately 1,700 subscribers via FTTH, and provides Broadband service to another 465 customers via Terrestrial Fixed Wireless outside the FTTH network footprint.

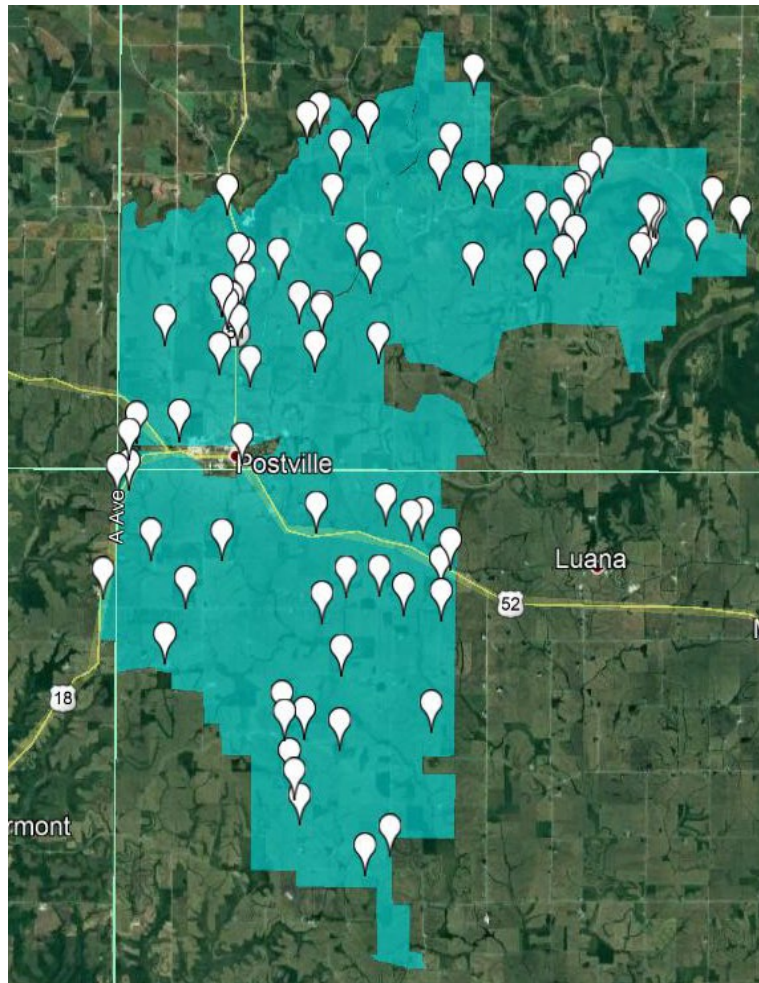
In addition to its own FTTH networks, NEIT is a partner of Community Digital Networks, and provides management services for the company, which provides FTTH service within Sumner, IA. NEIT also

provides management services for Hawkeye Telephone Company, which also has deployed FTTH to 100% of the locations in its ILEC network in and around Hawkeye, IA, as well as within seven other communities; Arlington, Fayette, Lawler, Maynard, Saint Lucas, Waucoma, Westgate and West Union.

NEIT has a long history of completing FTTH construction in advance of the deadlines required by funding support programs, including NEIT's ILEC FTTH networks which were Federally funded via ACAM-I, as well as the Iowa OCIO NOFA #003 funded Rural Luana and Postville Fiber to the Home Expansion project. In addition to this history of meeting requirements of outside funding, NEIT has been a longtime partner of local anchor institutions. When possible, NEIT provides free or discounted services to local Fire Departments, Libraries and other community service organizations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, NEIT worked with low-income families to provide free Internet service so their children could participate in remote learning efforts implemented by their schools.

The proposed Rural Postville 1 Gbps And Beyond FTTH Expansion (Secondary) project fits very well from a design and geographic standpoint into NEIT's existing FTTH network if NEIT is successful in its Rural Postville 1 Gbps And Beyond Fiber-to-the-Home Expansion (Primary) application. The Primary application must be awarded for NEIT for NEIT to serve the build area included in the Secondary application. NEIT has provided fixed wireless Broadband in portions of the project build area for over 15 years and is very familiar with the residents and businesses in the area. In preparation for NOFA #006, NEIT performed a high-level demand study to measure interest in NEIT expanding FTTH to locations in the proposed build area. The results of the survey were overwhelmingly positive. 63 survey letters were delivered to locations inside the proposed build area. A response rate of 33.33% was realized, and of those responses, 15 locations, or 71% of the responses indicated they would subscribe to NEIT Fiber Broadband if NEIT is successful in its grant application and extends FTTH to their locations. With a sample size of 21 locations (33.33% response rate) and a confidence level of 95%, NEIT can expect that 71% of all locations in the population (entire build area) are interested in NEIT FTTH Broadband, with +/- 18% margin of error.

To demonstrate the responses geographically, the positive Broadband responses are mapped below in white in relation to the proposed build area in green:



The proposed project is constrained geographically by the Postville, IA (563-864) Telephone Exchange Boundary. One census block included in the application is proposed to be partially served, as that census block includes area outside the boundary. Upon a Notice of Intent to Award, NEIT can provide detailed design maps to further demonstrate the edges of the proposed network.

Finally, aside from all of the experience, knowledge and dedication they bring to construction and operation of the proposed network expansion, NEIT staff members live, work and play in the area that we serve, including the proposed build area. Our existing customers and prospective customers in this area are our neighbors, friends and family, and we are dedicated to bringing them the service they demand today and far into the future.