

## Section 2.2.4 – Demonstrated Experience

Hawkeye Interconnect Company, LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Hawkeye Telephone Company (collectively referred to as HIC), and is based in Hawkeye, IA. HIC, established in 1913, has a long history of providing high quality wireline voice, wireless voice, Internet and video services to residents in Fayette County. HIC is and has always been committed to customer service and providing the latest communications services available to meet customer needs. HIC is a shareholder owned company and is managed by a board of five directors. A substantial number of shareholders live within HIC's service territory.

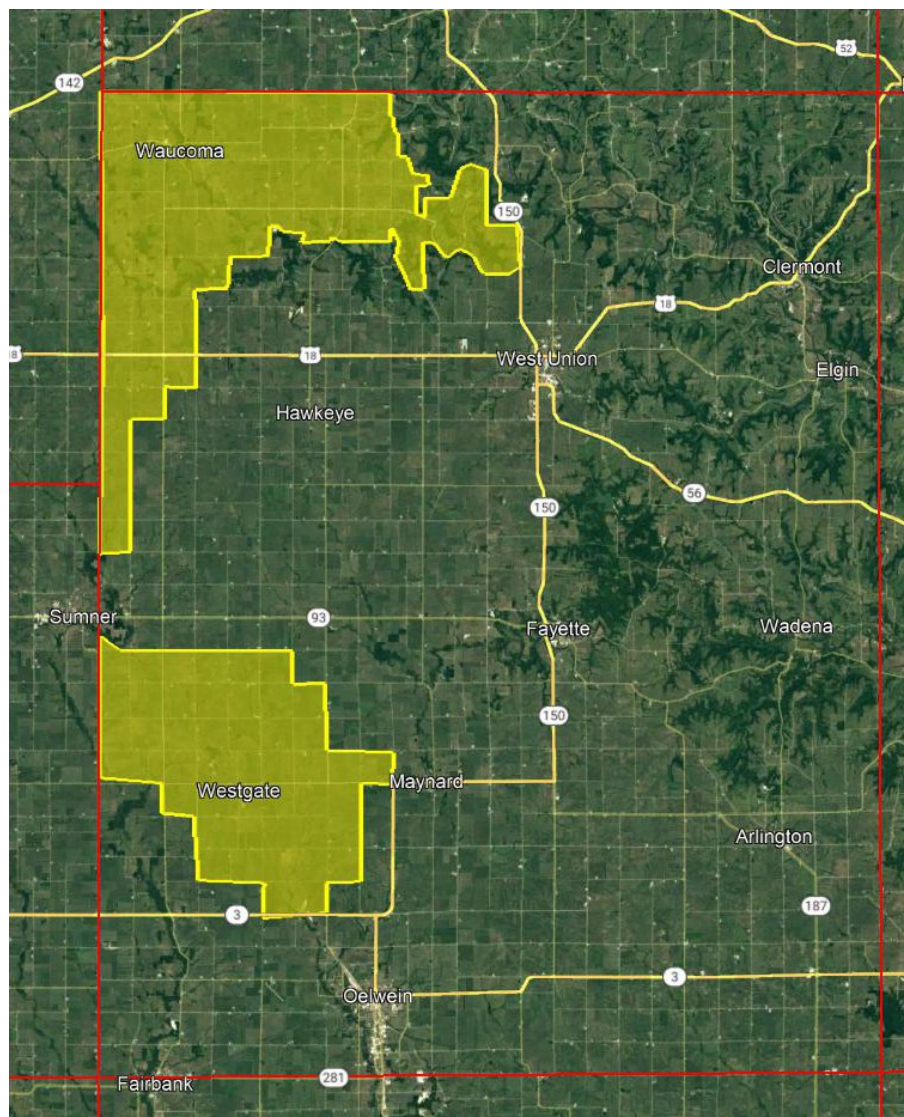
HIC currently employs a staff of five full-time employees and one part-time employee. HIC staff will utilize a wealth of knowledge to ensure the success of its proposed Western Fayette County 1 Gbps And Beyond Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) Expansion project. Staff directly involved with the proposed project will include two full-time customer service staff, three full-time trained FTTH technicians, and two senior key management employees. The senior managers include David Byers - GM and Craig Schmitt - Outside Plant Manager. HIC also has an existing management agreement in place with Northeast Iowa Telephone Company that provides additional experienced staff for the project; Steve Hanson - Director of Business Development, Charlie Roys – Outside Plant Manager, and Dave Lund – Network Manager. Combined, this management team has over 100 years of experience in building, operating and maintaining communications networks. When outside assistance is necessary, HIC has long-term relationships in place with numerous highly experienced telecommunications consultants and contractors, such as West Union Trenching, 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 HIC's Central Office equipment to the customer is never shared – service is delivered to each location with one or more dedicated strands of Fiber. HIC has selected an access equipment vendor (Calix) that has a consistent history of upgrading their product offerings as technology develops. Because of these design characteristics, HIC 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.

HIC constructed its first FTTH network in 2016, and since then has expanded its FTTH network to 100% of the locations within its ILEC exchange; Hawkeye (563-427). In addition to its ILEC territory, in 2019 HIC began expanding its network by adding CLEC FTTH service within the Cities of Arlington, Fayette, Lawler, Maynard, St. Lucas, Waucoma and Westgate. HIC is also nearing commencement of construction to serve 100% of locations within the city limits of West Union with FTTH. As a result of its awards from the Iowa OCIO NOFA #006 grant program, Hawkeye is preparing to commence construction to serve an additional 144 square miles with FTTH in Fayette County. Every mile of HIC's wireline network in operation today is Fiber-to-the-Home, providing Broadband service to approximately 800 subscribers via FTTH. In addition to its own FTTH networks, HIC is a partner of Community Digital Networks, which provides FTTH service within Sumner, IA.

HIC has a history of completing FTTH construction in advance of the deadlines required by funding support programs, including HIC's ILEC FTTH network which was Federally funded via ACAM-II. HIC has also been a longtime partner of local anchor institutions. When possible, HIC provides free or discounted services to local Fire Departments, Libraries and other community service organizations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, HIC offered free Internet service for low-income families where service was available so their children could participate in remote learning efforts implemented by their schools.

The proposed Western Fayette County 1 Gbps And Beyond FTTH Expansion project fits very well from a design and geographic standpoint into HIC's existing and planned FTTH network footprint. HIC currently provides FTTH Broadband in areas adjacent to the project build area and is very familiar with the residents and businesses in the area. The proposed build area is shown below shaded yellow:



Finally, aside from all of the experience, knowledge and dedication they bring to construction and operation of the proposed network expansion, HIC 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.

# GUNDERSEN

## PALMER LUTHERAN HOSPITAL AND CLINICS

**Office of the Chief Information Officer**

Annette Dunn  
200 E. Grand Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50309

Good Day,

Please accept this letter of support for Hawkeye Telephone Company's application to the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant Program Notice of Funding Availability #007 grant opportunity. This grant application requests funding to expand fiber broadband availability in Fayette County. Gundersen Palmer Lutheran Hospital & Clinics is one of six critical access networks put in place by Gundersen Health System (GHS) to provide increased access to underserved rural areas and represents a rural population that would greatly benefit from an award of this grant application.

These critical access hospitals and their associated clinics were constructed to provide care to underserved rural areas, which is best illustrated in the average population per square mile of 36.5 in these communities, which is just 42% of the national average. Expanding Access to Clinical Care Health Professional Shortage Areas is an issue throughout the Midwest, and it widens in the rural counties of Gundersen Palmer Hospital & Clinic's service area. The deficit grows wider with a 2,830:1 ratio for mental health providers compared to state's ratio of 700:1. Primary care provider shortage ratio equates to 2,860:1 compared to the state's ratio of 1,509:1.

Gundersen Palmer's service network includes a critical access hospital and outpatient clinic located in Fayette County, IA; along with additional Rural Health Clinics located in Allamakee and Clayton counties. Hawkeye Telephone Company's proposed broadband expansion would include these underserved areas in Fayette County, which according to US census data as of 7/1/2019 represent a population that broadly lacks access to broadband relative to the state and national averages. In Fayette County, only 76.4% of households possess a broadband connection. The US average for broadband is 82.7%.

Access to broadband plays a vital role in the current state of rural medicine, and that role is continuing to grow as our health system, along with others across the country, continue to expand telemedicine offerings in light of COVID-19. In response to the crisis, GHS instituted Project Phoenix, which set percentage-based goals for telemedicine usage across the entirety of the health system. GHS has committed to extending these goals beyond the pandemic, as a reimagining of care to provide greater access and efficiency for all patients moving forward. An award of the Hawkeye Telephone Company grant will greatly aid in the scale of this project and allow for the increased telemedicine capacity to be used by rural Iowa patients in underserved areas. To that end, an award of the Hawkeye Telephone Company grant would also help rural Iowa residents to realize travel-based cost savings. Many of our telemedicine programs would remove the need for patients to drive to their nearest hospital or clinic to receive care, especially those with chronic conditions that require frequent attention.

Thank you for your consideration,



Patrice Kuennen MSN, RN

Administrator ~ Gundersen Palmer Lutheran Hospital & Clinics

**Palmer Lutheran Hospital**  
112 Jefferson Street  
West Union, Iowa 52175  
(563) 422-3811  
Fax: (563) 422-9754

**Fayette Clinic**  
110 King Street  
Fayette, Iowa 52142  
(563) 425-3381  
Fax: (563) 425-4361

**Postville Clinic**  
111 South Reynolds Street  
Postville, Iowa 52162  
(563) 864-7512  
Fax: (563) 864-7511

**West Union Clinic**  
110 Jefferson Street  
West Union, Iowa 52175  
(563) 422-3817  
Fax: (563) 422-5937

Hawkeye Interconnect Company

PO Box 250

115 W Main St

Hawkeye, IA 52147

Dear Hawkeye Interconnect Company,

I have recently learned Hawkeye Interconnect Company is applying for a grant to expand their fiber optic network to the rural residences and businesses in Fayette County to improve broadband availability with fast and reliable service. I am a rural resident in the proposed area of fiber expansion and fully support Hawkeye Interconnect Company's grant request due to a need for improved service in our area.

The current availability of broadband in this area is insufficient. Residents who currently have Hawkeye Interconnect as a service provider have been extremely satisfied with their broadband service and would benefit from being a grant recipient to expand their current services to rural areas in Fayette County.

Sincerely,



Traci Schmitt

26450 W Ave

Waucoma, IA 52171



**Michael Bergan**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
*Fifty-Fifth District*  
Statehouse: (515) 281-3221  
e-mail – michael.bergan@legis.iowa.gov

HOME ADDRESS  
1204 North Bear Road  
Dorchester, Iowa 52140



## House of Representatives

State of Iowa  
*Eighty-Ninth General Assembly*  
STATEHOUSE  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

**COMMITTEES**  
Human Resources  
Economic Growth  
Labor  
Appropriations

**APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**  
Administration & Regulation, *Chair*

November 11, 2021

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

Re: Hawkeye Telephone Company – Broadband Grant Application

Dear Friends,

Hawkeye Telephone Company continues to be a strong community support in expanding broadband opportunity to Iowans. Hawkeye Telephone Company has been instrumental in making the necessary investments in our area to insure viability in communication infrastructure. With current fiber optic service expansion taking place, Hawkeye Telephone has developed a plan to bring comprehensive broadband coverage to an expanded customer base.

I can attest to the need for broadband in the area designated in the grant application. In previously serving as a county supervisor and now as a state representative, I have firsthand knowledge of the lack of broadband and other communication challenges in the proposed grant area. The Driftless Area of northeast Iowa is blessed with a diverse topography and natural attributes that includes limestone bluffs, cold-water trout streams and forests throughout our farm communities. These natural assets also contribute to challenges in communications, whether by cellphone, radio wave, microwave, or fiber optics. The hilly terrain and limestone limit the effectiveness of several communication options, increasing the costs substantially. I personally maintain a concern for our public safety, in having prompt and adequate response of police, fire, and ambulance services. The inequity in internet service options hampers students in their education opportunity, farms and businesses in improved efficiency and profitability, and overall quality of life expected from technology today.

I am encouraged by Hawkeye Telephone Company's leadership and initiative in meeting the broadband needs of our community, ensuring that customers have 100/100 broadband access. I support their application for grant assistance from the Office of the Chief Information Officer. I ask that due diligence is made in the review of their application.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Bergan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Bergan" clearly distinguishable.  
Michael Bergan

Hawkeye Interconnect Company

PO Box 250

115 W Main St

Hawkeye, IA 52147

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Wolf". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan Wolfs

26043 W Ave

Waucoma, IA 52171

**North Fayette Valley Community School District**

Proud to be NFV

**600 N. Pine Street, P.O. Box 73, West Union, Iowa 52175****Phone (563) 422-3851 - Fax (563) 422-3854**[www.nfvschools.com](http://www.nfvschools.com)**Joe Griffith, Superintendent****Travis Elliott, PK-5 Principal****Micah Gearhart, PK-8 Principal****Lori Westhoff, 9-12 Principal****Betsy Nefzger, Curriculum Director**

November 15, 2021

TO: Craig Schmitt, Plant Manager Hawkeye Telephone Company

FROM: Alex Snyder, Technology Director

RE: Recommendation for Fiber Expansion

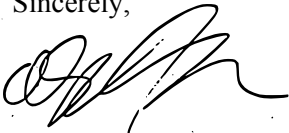
Dear Mr. Schmitt,

Please consider this letter to the State of Iowa, which is in support of HTC, and their application for funding through the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant Program Notice of Funding Availability #007. HTC's proposal is to expand fiber networking in areas that include the North Fayette Valley School District. This expansion is critical to ensuring our rural staff and students have access to an affordable and modern internet service. With 38% of our families eligible for the National School Lunch Program, it's integral for our rural students to have affordable internet access with the migration to hybrid and online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now that this technology has become a part of our district, it will be critical that our families have access to our online services.

In review of the proposed area, the existing services to residents and businesses are inadequate to serve current needs. In our district, some families have access to high quality internet services, while others do not. The proposed expansion would greatly increase the abilities of our families to move toward modern learning models, and allow them the same access available to those in less rural areas.

I've been with the Technology Department for five years, and can attest to the quality of service and leadership provided by HTC. They have supported our district heavily, and are most deserving of this award to continue to support education in rural Iowa.

Sincerely,



Alex Snyder  
Technology Director, North Fayette Valley CSD