

Jacques L. Blanchette

From: Lonnie Hunt <lhunt@detcog.org>
Sent: Tuesday, June 25, 2019 10:28 AM
To: Mark Allen; Kenneth Weeks; Jacques Blanchette; Fritz Faulkner; Daryl Melton; Jeff Boyd; Sydney Murphy
Cc: Bob Bashaw
Subject: Re: Broadband funding in your county

One additional point I forgot to make: We don't need the money right now. We just need a commitment for it that we can show too EDA. If you are able to make the commitment, you can put the money into your 2020 budget and pay it during Fiscal Year 2020.

On Tue, Jun 25, 2019 at 10:19 AM Lonnie Hunt <lhunt@detcog.org> wrote:
Judges:

This is going out to the judges in our seven Hurricane Harvey disaster counties. I'm using bullet points to be as concise as possible while bringing you up to date on activities related to our broadband initiative.

- inCode Consulting has completed the regional broadband study and developed a "roadmap" for deployment of broadband in all 12 of our counties.
- The next step, which is required before we can access any grant funds or private investment to actually build out a broadband network, is "Network Design" which must be certified by a professional engineer.
- We have obtained a preliminary verbal approval from EDA for a \$600,000 grant to do the Network Design for our seven Hurricane Harvey counties. (The money is coming from EDA's Harvey Supplemental Appropriation so it can only be used in the disaster counties.)
- The EDA grant requires a 20 percent local match, which is \$150,000. Total project is \$750,000 -- \$600k from EDA and \$150k from local.
- We have been attempting to find the \$150,000 from another source, but have been unsuccessful. If we don't find it soon, we will lose the \$600,000 from EDA -- they have other applicants waiting that they can give the money to.
- Judge Melton brought this before the Sabine County Commissioners Court and they have committed to pay their share of the local match for Sabine County. If the other six counties can do the same, we can get the EDA money and move this project forward. If your county is unable to come up with your local match, can you raise it from another organization(s) within your county?
- Based strictly on population of each county (shown in the table below), here are the amounts that would be needed from each county to make up the \$150,000:
 - Jasper (21.24%) \$31,860
 - Newton (8.15%) \$12,225
 - Polk (29.62%) \$44,430
 - Sabine (6.27%) \$9,405
 - San Augustine (4.87%) \$7,305
 - San Jacinto (17%) 25,500
 - Tyler (12.85%) \$19,275
- It's possible the cost could be less. We'd have to go through a procurement process to select the firm that does the Network Design. We think it will cost less than \$750,000. The amounts listed above would be the maximum required from each county. However, we have to have a commitment for that amount (totaling \$150,000) to provide to EDA before they will finalize the grant to us.

- You may ask, "What about the other five counties not in the Harvey declaration?" We will continue to look for funding from other sources to do the Network Design for them; however, whatever we come up with is likely going to require some local match, so at some point we are probably going to have to ask them to chip in, too. This is a long process -- one step at a time. We can only move to the next step as we find the funding to pay for it. Right now, the good news is, we have the funding to pay for the next step in your counties -- if we can get the local match.
- I know it's difficult to get everyone together, but since we have a DETCOG board meeting this Thursday in Nacogdoches, that would be an opportunity to sit down and discuss this and answer questions you have. Or, we could set up a conference call. But we are going to have to act pretty quickly in order to save the EDA funding. EDA notified us in late May of this preliminary approval and they asked for us to provide them with a letter of commitment for the local match two weeks ago. We thought we had a good chance to get the money from another source and not have to ask the counties to pitch in, so we have been stalling EDA for the past two weeks. That other source has not come through, so this is what we're down to.

Please respond with any questions, comments, ideas.... And please let me know if you could meet Thursday at 11 am prior to the DETCOG meeting in Nacogdoches, or at approximately 1:30 pm following the DETCOG meeting.

Thanks,
Lonnie

Geography Name	Year	Population by Age & Race - Total Population
Custom Region	2018	168,885
Geography Name	Year	Population by Age & Race - Total Population
Jasper County, TX	2018	35,872
Newton County, TX	2018	13,746
Polk County, TX	2018	50,031
Sabine County, TX	2018	10,589
San Augustine County, TX	2018	8,232
San Jacinto County, TX	2018	28,719
Tyler County, TX	2018	21,696