TED STRICKLAND
GOVERNOR
STATE OF OHIO

October 14, 2009

Mr. Lawrence Strickling
Assistant Secretary for Communications
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Telecommunications and
Information Administration
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Assistant Secretary Strickling:

The State of Ohio is engaged in a comprehensive effort to expand broadband availability and use in our state to support its citizens and businesses as they adapt to a digital economy through broadband planning and development. Launched in 2007, our Broadband Ohio initiative provides coordination of state broadband investments under the guidance of the Ohio Broadband Council. In 2008, we established Connect Ohio, a public private partnership aimed at promoting broadband access and adoption through research, collaboration with providers, and engagement with communities in all 88 counties of Ohio. Our state is well situated to serve as a model for other states preparing to implement plans to reduce the digital divide through additional investments made possible by the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* of 2009.

While Ohio has a robust environment in place, there remain areas of the state where commercial broadband is not available to businesses and residents. Through the Connect Ohio initiative to benchmark broadband availability through mapping, the State of Ohio has identified areas that remain without access to broadband service, defined as terrestrial service offering download speeds of 768K or greater. These unserved areas represent approximately 5.2% of households in Ohio, and over 37% of its geographical area. The lack of coverage, primarily concentrated in rural areas, is likely due to terrain and the inability of providers to aggregate sufficient demand to ensure a reasonable return on investment. It is clear that without federal support these areas and populations will remain without access to sufficient broadband capabilities.

At the same time, only 62% of Ohio adults subscribe to broadband services at home. In our surveys, we found the following were the most common reason given for not subscribing to broadband: that broadband offers no value or benefits, the price is too high, respondents do not own a computer, no broadband is available where they live, or respondents use broadband primarily outside the home. We support funding for sustainable adoption programs aimed at addressing these barriers.

Ohio's BTOP Review Process

Ohio appreciates the opportunity to consult with NTIA on the Broadband Technologies Opportunity Program (BTOP) applications that propose to serve areas of Ohio. In approaching this task, a review team was established, comprised of representatives of my office, the Office of Information Technology at the Ohio Department of Administrative Services, Ohio Board of Regents, Ohio Academic Resource Network (OARnet), Ohio Department of Development, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, Connect Ohio and the Governor's Office of Appalachia.

Applications were reviewed in the three categories of funding established by NTIA including Infrastructure (Last Mile and Middle Mile), Public Computing Centers and Sustainable Adoption based on project information provided by NTIA. The State contacted applicants for additional information as necessary.

The evaluation team used Ohio's broadband availability map and supporting research data that were generated through the Connect Ohio effort to guide its efforts. This unique data includes a detailed statewide broadband availability map, prepared using provider-supplied data and informed by feedback from the public. We used additional county-level data on residential and consumer broadband usage and barriers to adoption that were gathered through statewide telephone surveys. Maps and research materials are attached to this letter and can also be viewed in more detail on Connect Ohio's website at http://connectohio.org/mapping_and_research/. We encourage NTIA to make use of these materials when evaluating applications from Ohio.

In general, projects that support broadband deployment to provide service to the unserved, provide advanced services to those areas we believe are underserved, or address identified barriers to broadband adoption are aligned with our state strategy for expanded broadband availability and statewide digital inclusion. To ensure this alignment, the review team established specific review criteria consistent with BTOP statutory purpose as well as public comments the State has made in its Strategic Planning efforts and to NTIA through the official request for information period earlier this year.

The criteria were:

1) Proposed service area is unserved, based on availability mapping
2) Proposed service area is underserved, based on county-level data reflecting number of broadband providers, average access speed and adoption rate
3) County unemployment rate is above average
4) County adoption rate is below average
5) Service was negatively impacted by State budget reductions
6) Direct economic development benefit – Ohio-based applicant
7) Community-prioritized project through Connect Ohio
8) Reflects core business of the applicant

In general, we looked at multi-state or nationwide applications only when they provided a clear indication of direct and specific benefit to Ohio.

Ohio Recommended Projects

While our strategy of expanding broadband access to unserved and underserved consumers is in line with BTOP's primary statutory purpose, we additionally support the goals of enhancing public safety communications that were envisioned by the ARRA legislation. Based on the information made available to us, we determined that the projects listed in the attached materials are in alignment with Ohio's strategic broadband goals. Projects are not listed in a priority order, nor do we assume that all applications meet NTIA's eligibility requirements including technical specifications or financial sustainability.

Thank you for your consideration of these applications. Please contact Terra Goodnight in my office at (614) 387-2958 with any questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,

Ted Strickland
Governor, State of Ohio

Ohio Response - Recommended Projects

Projects are not listed in a priority order, nor do we assume that all applications met NTIA's eligibility requirements including technical specifications or financial sustainability.

Infrastructure - Last Mile

- Access Ohio Valley – Access Ohio Valley/Jefferson County
- Benton Ridge Telephone Co. – Benton Ridge Telephone Company Broadband Expansion Project - New Bavaria/North Creek
- Davis Voice & Data - Ohio Project/Max Wireless
- iPCS, Inc. - Rural Wireless 3G Broadband Expansion
- New Era Broadband, LLC - Wireless Broadband Service in Meigs County, Ohio
- North Coast Wireless Communications - Castalia Ohio Regional Broadband Access Project
- North Coast Wireless Communications - Plymouth Ohio Regional Broadband Access Project
- Northeast Ohio Management Information Network - Broadband Connections to Ashtabula and Trumbull County Ohio K-12 School Buildings
- Ohio PC Solutions, INC. - Wireless Broadband to Guernsey County, Ohio
- Southern Ohio Health Care Network - The Connecting Appalachia Initiative
- Utopian Wireless Corporation - Utopian Kinsman WiMax Project
- Utopian Wireless Corporation – Utopian Garrettsville WiMax Project

Infrastructure - Middle Mile

- Consolidated Electric Cooperative Inc - North Central Ohio Rural Fiber Optic Network
- Country Connections LLC - Fayette County Ohio Area Remote Broadband
- Darke County Ohio - Western Ohio Wireless Broadband Network
- OneCommunity - Rural = Urban: From Rust Belt to Tech Powerhouse
- State Library of Ohio - OPLIN Router Upgrades
- Zito Media Communications II, LLC - Southeastern Ohio and Northern West Virginia Fiber Ring Project
- Zito Media Communications II, LLC - Northeastern Ohio and Northwestern Pennsylvania Fiber Ring Project

In addition we support urban infrastructure projects that seek to extend or enhance public safety and other municipal services.

Municipal Infrastructure Projects

- City of Cleveland - City of Cleveland Broadband Project
- City of Columbus - Intelligent Urbanization
- City of Dayton - Dayton Digital Development (3D)

Public Computing Center

- Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority – Computer Connection
- Birchard Public Library of Sandusky County - Ohio Community Technology Centers Program: Birchard Public Library of Sandusky County
- Case Western Reserve University – University Circle Innovation Zone: An Integrated Ultra Broadband Public Services Platform – Train
- City of Dayton - Dayton Digital Development (3D) Public Access
- Connect Ohio, LLC - Connect Ohio - Public Computing Centers
- Coshocton Public Library - Ohio Community Technology Centers Program: Coshocton Public Library
- Cuyahoga County Public Library - Cuyahoga County Public Library: Technology Access Centers
- Greene County Public Library - Greene County Public Library: Public Laptop Computers and Mobile Training Lab
- Morgan County Learning Center - Morgan County Education and Broadband Access Program
- Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio Inc. - Regional Fusion Public Computer Centers
- Portsmouth Public Library - Ohio Community Technology Centers Program: Portsmouth Public Library
- Ritter Public Library - Ritter Public Library Computing Center
- Shaker Heights Public Library - Connect Ohio Community Technology Centers Program: Shaker Library Public Computer & Business Centers
- Stark County District Library - Public Computing Center and Training Lab

Sustainable Adoption

- Case Western Reserve University – University Circle Innovation Zone: An Integrated Ultra Broadband Public Services Platform – Adopt
- Connected Nation - Connect Ohio - Sustainable Adoption
- Connected Nation - Every Citizen Online
- Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio Inc - Broadband Education and Empowerment Project
- Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation - Ohio Broadband Access Initiative for Civil Legal Services Attorneys
- OneCommunity - Connect Your Community

Ohio Response - Supplemental Information

Ohio's Current Broadband Environment

Ohio has a robust network environment in place to serve the needs of state government agencies as well as education and research. This infrastructure is not commercially available to provide broadband access to Ohio businesses and residents. In order to address the availability gap for Ohio's unserved and underserved Connect Ohio was established. Connect Ohio works with communities and providers to identify demand and build the necessary business case to extend services.

Connect Ohio – In 2007, Governor Strickland, in partnership with Connected Nation, Inc., established Connect Ohio to research broadband availability and technology use across the state, mapping results of that research to help define those areas that lack availability. Connect Ohio has developed local technology strategy plans, identified business and residential demand for broadband to support build out by providers, as well as educational initiatives to educate those not familiar with the benefits and operational basics of broadband adoption. http://connectohio.org/mapping_and_research/

OARnet – The Ohio Academic Resources Network operates a highly scalable, fiber-optic, statewide network backbone that consists of more than 1,850 miles of optical fiber, providing connectivity to Ohio's colleges and universities, K-12 schools, public broadcasting stations, academic medical centers, and state, federal partnering research organizations. The network also supports the collaborative IT initiatives of the Ohio Board of Regents: the Ohio Library and Information Network (OhioLINK), the Ohio Learning Network (OLN), and eTech-Ohio's K-12 network. Additionally, OARnet staff members are conducting innovative network research, such as advancing remote instrumentation of scientific instrumentation and high-definition videoconferencing between neonatal specialists and rural medical centers.

Telehealth Networks – In 2007, the Federal Communications Commission's Rural Health Care Pilot Program funded three Ohio regional telehealth networks with awards totaling more than $27 million, representing the largest state share of funding among the states and U.S. territories participating in the program. These projects will provide high-speed connections to health care facilities in to "significantly increase access to acute, primary and preventive health care in rural America."

Telehealth Video Resource Center – In 2008, Governor Strickland funded the creation of the TVRC in Columbus. The Center's launch has strengthened and built more linkages between higher education and Ohio's healthcare industries, a targeted economic development area of significant importance to the State. The Center exists as an independent, nonprofit organization that supports the use of high-quality video for health education and training, research, and associated clinical activities.

Multi-Agency Statewide Communications System – MARCS is a complex communications network designed to provide instant voice and data communications statewide. MARCS provides a communications backbone for statewide public safety and emergency management in a single system shared by several state agencies and many local first responders. The system provides mobile voice, data, vehicle location services and computer-aided dispatching.

Unified Network Services - Shared voice and data infrastructure for state cabinet agencies is provided through the Ohio Department of Administrative Services which also serves as the Internet Service Provider to state government.

County Level Broadband Service & Usage Data

County	broadband availability	adoption rate	total # HH	unserved # HH	avg cost of service	avg speed (mbps)	Unemployment rate
Adams	47.91%	16%	11,822	6,158	$37.90	2.2	15.3%
Allen	99.67%	53%	44,245	146	$38.80	1.7	11.7%
Ashland	93.67%	48%	20,832	1,319	$30.40	1.7	13.0%
Ashtabula	90.87%	49%	43,792	3,998	$34.10	1.1	14.2%
Athens	85.07%	35%	24,901	3,718	$41.50	3.3	10.3%
Auglaize	98.83%	56%	18,470	216	$39.20	2.1	11.6%
Belmont	82.28%	40%	31,236	5,535	$30.10	2.2	9.2%
Brown	69.83%	39%	17,193	5,187	$37.95	2.5	12.9%
Butler	99.03%	54%	129,793	1,259	$34.90	2.5	10.6%
Carroll	60.48%	29%	13,016	5,144	$35.70	1.5	14.9%
Champaign	79.01%	55%	15,890	3,335	$36.90	2.3	13.1%
Clark	97.48%	50%	61,056	1,539	$35.20	3.2	11.7%
Clermont	97.91%	60%	69,226	1,447	$36.90	2.26	10.4%
Clinton	87.81%	36%	16,577	2,021	$37.50	1.4	14.6%
Columbiana	82.17%	43%	46,083	8,217	$35.00	2.1	14.7%
Coshocton	70.71%	32%	16,107	4,718	$34.40	1.2	14.1%
Crawford	98.64%	31%	20,178	274	$30.70	2.7	15.1%
Cuyahoga	99.78%	57%	616,903	1,357	$32.10	2.2	9.5%
Darke	81.64%	39%	21,583	3,963	$35.30	2.4	11.7%
Defiance	98.89%	56%	16,040	178	$35.50	1.2	15.4%
Delaware	96.73%	73%	42,374	1,386	$38.40	2.7	7.7%
Erie	98.51%	48%	35,909	535	$32.90	2.1	10.8%
Fairfield	89.68%	58%	47,922	4,946	$37.10	2.7	9.3%
Fayette	95.46%	39%	11,904	540	$33.80	1.8	12.1%
Franklin	99.97%	67%	471,016	141	$38.20	2.3	9.2%
Fulton	97.47%	60%	16,232	411	$36.90	1.9	14.7%
Gallia	74.55%	21%	13,498	3,435	$30.40	1.5	9.3%
Geauga	89.46%	62%	32,805	3,458	$31.80	2	7.4%
Greene	96.40%	64%	58,224	2,096	$32.90	3	10.7%
Guernsey	75.45%	30%	18,771	4,608	$36.80	2.2	13.1%
Hamilton	99.93%	58%	373,393	261	$37.50	2.8	9.9%
Hancock	99.04%	59%	29,785	286	$37.20	2	10.8%

County	broadband availability	adoption rate	total # HH	unserved # HH	avg cost of service	avg speed (mbps)	Unemployment rate
Hardin	93.68%	36%	12,907	816	$38.40	2.1	13.1%
Harrison	65.35%	39%	7,680	2,661	$33.80	2.4	12.5%
Henry	97.36%	42%	11,622	307	$37.90	1.6	14.1%
Highland	69.58%	38%	17,583	5,349	$38.90	2.7	16.5%
Hocking	53.86%	28%	12,141	5,602	$37.70	2.6	11.6%
Holmes	60.92%	35%	12,280	4,799	$33.00	2.3	7.9%
Huron	95.27%	46%	23,594	1,116	$34.60	1.4	14.7%
Jackson	72.09%	27%	13,909	3,882	$39.70	2.3	11.9%
Jefferson	89.35%	38%	33,291	3,545	$38.50	0.9	13.1%
Knox	82.93%	42%	21,793	3,720	$39.10	1.5	10.2%
Lake	94.34%	67%	93,487	5,291	$29.90	1.8	8.8%
Lawrence	83.52%	30%	27,189	4,481	$44.20	3.2	8.8%
Licking	97.26%	54%	58,760	1,610	$35.80	2	10.2%
Logan	92.45%	47%	21,571	1,629	$35.50	1.6	12.5%
Lorain	99.33%	60%	111,368	746	$36.60	1.7	10.3%
Lucas	99.91%	55%	196,259	177	$31.50	3	14.4%
Madison	90.40%	50%	14,399	1,382	$42.40	2.2	9.9%
Mahoning	98.96%	52%	111,762	1,162	$31.90	3.3	14.3%
Marion	97.59%	54%	26,298	634	$33.20	2.4	11.3%
Medina	94.22%	65%	56,793	3,283	$33.20	2.2	8.5%
Meigs	70.92%	23%	10,782	3,135	$32.70	2	16.7%
Mercer	91.56%	50%	15,875	1,340	$35.00	1.1	9.4%
Miami	90.47%	61%	40,554	3,865	$34.90	1.5	12.9%
Monroe	51.59%	18%	7,212	3,491	$29.80	1.5	12.9%
Montgomery	99.02%	61%	248,443	2,435	$35.20	1.8	12.5%
Morgan	56.76%	25%	7,771	3,360	$32.90	1.7	15.8%
Morrow	82.58%	41%	12,132	2,113	$38.80	2.1	11.2%
Muskingum	85.56%	51%	35,163	5,078	$37.70	2	12.7%
Noble	46.70%	21%	5,480	2,921	$37.50	1.2	16.2%
Ottawa	94.14%	47%	25,532	1,496	$33.60	3.6	13.7%
Paulding	98.16%	54%	8,478	156	$35.60	1.9	14.5%
Perry	64.33%	35%	13,655	4,871	$37.00	1.7	13.7%
Pickaway	81.17%	46%	18,596	3,502	$39.00	1.9	11.6%
Pike	78.17%	39%	11,602	2,533	$34.40	1.8	15.6%

County	broadband availability	adoption rate	total # HH	unserved # HH	avg cost of service	avg speed (mbps)	Unemployment rate
Portage	92.75%	64%	60,096	4,357	$31.70	2.3	10.8%
Preble	80.76%	46%	17,186	3,307	$39.20	1.7	12.8%
Putnam	98.21%	42%	12,753	228	$36.50	2.4	9.7%
Richland	96.83%	56%	53,062	1,682	$40.80	2.1	14.3%
Ross	95.27%	49%	29,461	1,394	$37.50	2.5	12.7%
Sandusky	97.64%	56%	25,253	596	$37.80	1.9	12.5%
Scioto	87.01%	39%	34,054	4,424	$35.30	4.6	13.3%
Seneca	100.00%	52%	23,692	0	$37.70	2.8	13.6%
Shelby	91.62%	58%	18,682	1,566	$40.50	2.3	13.9%
Stark	96.29%	60%	157,024	5,826	$32.70	2.3	12.1%
Summit	98.26%	64%	230,880	4,017	$31.20	1.6	10.7%
Trumbull	95.99%	58%	95,117	3,814	$33.90	2.1	15.6%
Tuscarawas	82.51%	51%	38,113	6,666	$34.80	2.2	12.1%
Union	91.80%	58%	15,217	1,248	$42.50	2.2	9.3%
Van Wert	94.28%	47%	12,363	707	$35.10	3.3	15.4%
Vinton	54.65%	33%	5,653	2,564	$41.20	1.9	13.3%
Warren	98.32%	70%	58,692	986	$37.60	2.3	9.8%
Washington	76.44%	37%	27,760	6,540	$36.80	3	9.4%
Wayne	95.50%	50%	42,324	1,905	$35.40	1.6	10.6%
Williams	98.94%	40%	16,140	171	$30.30	2.5	17.5%
Wood	99.91%	56%	47,468	43	$38.20	3.3	12.8%
Wyandot	96.00%	39%	9,324	373	$30.00	2.5	13.2%

Source: Connect Ohio Research, Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, Ohio Department of Development