NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC

and

Kilgore Memorial Library – York, Nebraska

Nebraska Universal Service Fund

Broadband Program

2015 Broadband Adoption Grant Application

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Submitted to the Nebraska Public Service Commission
November 26, 2014

Applicant Information

NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC

As a recipient of a Broadband Technology Opportunities Program grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC, formed in 2010, is a collaboration of seven Nebraska rural, independent telephone companies. NebraskaLink has deployed a high-speed, state of the art fiber network throughout the State of Nebraska, connecting Nebraska's communities and integral community anchor institutions such as state and local governmental agencies, libraries, educational networks, colleges, schools, healthcare providers and financial institutions. NebraskaLink has the managerial, technical and financial competence necessary to accomplish the proposed project.

Kilgore Memorial Library

Kilgore Memorial Library is the public library that serves York, Nebraska, a community with approximately 7,800 residents.

Contact Information:

NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC
3900 NW 12th Street
Suite 100
Lincoln, NE 68521

Kilgore Memorial Library
520 North Nebraska Avenue
York, NE 68467

The main point of contact for this project is:

Jason Axthelm
Vice President of Business Development
Office Telephone Number: (402) 817-1839
Email: Jason.axthelm@nebraskalink.com

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Project Information

Recognizing that substantial barriers to broadband adoption persist in the State of Nebraska and that those barriers continue to increase the digital divide that pervades through many underserved populations, including the low income, minorities, disabled, elderly and those living in rural areas, the progressive approach of the Nebraska Public Service Commission ("Commission") has made grant funding available through the Nebraska Broadband Adoption Grant Program to provide specific and targeted support to foster innovative programs geared toward increasing broadband adoption rates and closing the digital divide in the State of Nebraska.

Research has identified the major barriers to broadband adoption are access, affordability, relevancy and usefulness.[1] For broadband adoption programs, partnerships between multiple entities can maximize limited funding, foster the sharing of information and resources, and encourage stakeholders with the same goal, in this case, connectivity to underserved populations, to work together.

NebraskaLink, in partnership with the Kilgore Memorial Library, the public library that serves York, proposes a multi-faceted approach to increase the connectivity and capacity of the Kilgore Memorial Library, giving the library the necessary connectivity to meet the demand for digital literacy programs and training. Nebraska public libraries are key partners in efforts to provide community anchor-based public access to the Internet, access to E-Government services, and training on computer applications. With the proper facilities in place, libraries can serve as a gateway to broadband adoption to increase use through digital literacy programs which can emphasize the relevance and usefulness of broadband service in everyday life as public libraries are heavily relied upon for free access to technology, broadband connectivity and a wide range of Internet-enabled services.[2] For residents who may not be able to afford broadband service at their homes, the Internet access provided by the library may be the only Internet access they have to conduct employment searches, complete online job applications, upload resumes and apply for government services. The free broadband Internet access provided by the public libraries can bridge the digital divide between those that have access and those who do not.[3]

The proposed project between NebraskaLink and Kilgore Memorial Library consists of three components: construction and access, internal infrastructure and digital literacy training.

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[1] *Internet Connectivity and Use in Nebraska: A Follow-Up Study* (April 2014), Vogt et al, pages 6-10.
[2] "Thirty-two percent of the households without Internet access use the computer resources at public use facilities." *Id*. at 14.
[3] *Broadband in Nebraska Current Landscape and Recommendations*, 2014, http://broadband.nebraska.gov/documents/4583971/16202884/state+bb+plan+9-19/f8159d42-5cec-44a6-b733-72481031a131

1. Construction and Access

[redacted]

Facility	[redacted]	Construction Grant Request
[redacted]		

2. Internal Infrastructure/WiFi Equipment for Library Premises

[redacted]

[redacted]

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[redacted]

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3. Digital Literacy Training

If awarded funding for the digital literacy and training component, NebraskaLink will partner and contract with the Nebraska Library Commission ("NLC") for the coordination of digital literacy training and educational services at Kilgore Memorial Library. The Nebraska Library Commission staff will assist Kilgore Memorial Library with training needs assessment and evaluation, manage the agreements and payments with Southeast Community College, assist Kilgore Memorial Library with marketing and evaluation of the training, and assist NebraskaLink in reporting on the success of the grant award. The Nebraska Library Commission is an ideal partner with NebraskaLink and Kilgore Memorial Library as the NLC was integral in the implementation of the Library Broadband Builds Nebraska Communities Project, which was funded through the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program and helped to improve connectivity and access to public computing centers in 147 public libraries across Nebraska. From the Library Broadband Builds Nebraska Communities Project, the NLC has observed the benefits to communities through the availability of digital literacy training programs.

The Nebraska Library Commission will model the digital literacy training component on the recent enormously successful experience partnering with Nebraska community colleges to provide digital literacy training through 484 computer application classes reaching 3,220 students (including library staff, members of the public and volunteers) for a total of 1,756 hours of instruction at 79 libraries. The training component of this project will utilize the trusted human and physical library resources in the community to address three important reasons why late adopters do not subscribe to broadband at home or in their businesses: negative perception, lack of understanding of the relevance of the Internet in their lives, and skill deficiencies.[4]

The Nebraska Library Commission has provided detail on the type of digital literacy programs and training classes that will be available in the Kilgore Memorial Library through its training partnership with Southeast Community College.

[4] *2013 NTIA Broadband Adoption Toolkit*, http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/files/toolkit_042913.pdf

Name of Training Topic Available for Selection	Suggested # of Class Contact Hours
Microsoft Office Applications:	
MS Excel - Module 1 - Fundamentals	2 to 4
MS Excel - Module 2 - Editing and Formatting	2 to 4
MS PowerPoint - Module 1 - Fundamentals	2 to 4
MS PowerPoint - Module 2 - Polishing Touches	2 to 4
MS Word - Module 1 - Creating Documents	2 to 4
MS Word - Module 2 - Polishing Touches	2 to 4
MS Outlook - Basic	2
Working w/Graphics in Word, Excel & PowerPoint	2
Specialty Topics:	
Computer Basics 101	8
Computer Basics 201	8
E-Bay Overview	2
Facebook for Beginners	2
Safety on the Worldwide Web	2
Pinterest 101	2
Digital Scrapbooking using Shutterfly	2 or 4
Twitter for Beginners	2
Using Picasa to organize photos	2
Tips and Tricks for your PC…bring your questions	2
Using the Cloud	2
Smartphone Photography	2
Computer Repair 101	2
Apple iPad Level 1	2
Apple iPad Level 2	2
Social Media Bootcamp	3

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Total	

Financial Information

Component	Total
Total	

Verifications

NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC commits to abide by all applicable Commission rules, regulations and orders.

NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC commits to using the 2015 Broadband Adoption Grant Program funding for the purposes intended and which have been approved by the Commission through the application process.

NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC commits to fulfilling all reporting and audit requirements adopted by the Commission for oversight of the Broadband Adoption Grant Program funds.

Supporting Documentation

Included with this application is an Affidavit of Jason Axthelm, Vice President of Business Development of NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC attesting to the truth and accuracy of all information included in this application.

Also included with this application and provided electronically are the following:

1. Budget and Financial Information in Excel Format
2. Proposal for Managed WiFi Services Prepared by Communications Services, Inc.
3. Letter of Support from Kilgore Memorial Library
4. Letter of Support from Southeast Community College
5. Letter of Support from the Nebraska Library Commission

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BEFORE THE
NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Application of	)	
NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC	)	Application No. _____
Seeking Support Funding from the	)	
Nebraska Universal Service Fund	)	
Broadband Adoption Grant Program	)	
	)	

AFFIDAVIT OF JASON AXTHELM
IN SUPPORT OF
NEBRASKALINK HOLDINGS, LLC'S
NEBRASKA UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND BROADBAND PROGRAM
2015 BROADBAND ADOPTION GRANT APPLICATION

I, Jason Axthelm, being of lawful age and duly sworn, state as follows:

1. My name is Jason Axthelm. My business address is 3900 NW 12th Street, Suite 100, Lincoln, Nebraska 68521. My title is Vice President of Business Development at NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC and I have worked for the company in this capacity since 2013. I am responsible for overseeing the sales and business department of NebraskaLink, project development, network deployment decisions and general management duties of the company.
2. I submit this affidavit in support of the Matter of the Application of NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC Seeking Support Funding from the Nebraska Universal Service Fund Broadband Adoption Grant Program.
3. I hereby verify that, as the Vice President of Business Development at NebraskaLink, I have reviewed the information and documentation submitted in support of NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC's Grant Application for funding from the Nebraska Universal Service

Fund Broadband Adoption Grant Program and filed with the Nebraska Public Service Commission on November 26, 2014 and attest to the truth and accuracy to the best of my knowledge and belief of all of the information included in NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC application.

4. This completes my affidavit.

VERIFICATION

I, Jason Axthelm, declare under penalty of perjury that the statements in this Affidavit are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Jason Axthelm
Vice President of Business Development
NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC

GENERAL NOTARY-State of Nebraska
KASEY J ROBINSON
My Comm. Exp. May 23, 2017

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 24 day of November, 2014.

Kasey Robinson

Kasey Robinson (Printed Name)

Notary Public, Lancaster County, Nebraska

Acting in the County of Lancaster

My Commission Expires: May 23, 2017

NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC and York-Kilgore Memorial Library
Construction and Access Budget

Facility	Address	Cost	[redacted]	Construction Grant Request
York-Kilgore Memorial Library	520 N Nebraska Ave, York, NE 68467	[redacted]		

[redacted]

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NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC and Kilgore Memorial Library
Internal Infrastructure/WiFi Budget

[redacted]

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NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC and Kilgore Memorial Library
Digital Literacy Training Budget

[redacted]

TOTAL

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PROPOSAL: Managed WiFi

Nebraska Libraries

DATE: *November 20, 2014*

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PREPARD BY:

Brian Barnes
Strategic Account Manager
Communication Services Inc.
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Omaha, NE 68144
Phone: (402) 597-3333x132
Email: brian.barnes@1csi.com

Verlyn Veldhouse
President
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CORPORATE EXPERIENCE

Communication Services, Inc.:

CSI was founded in 1991 as a regional provider of telephone systems and services. Clearly, the "communications" industry has evolved over the past 23 years and CSI has been the area's leader in the advancing technology. Our products and services are wide ranging in that we provide engineered voice, video and data solutions whether wired or wireless, indoors or out, above ground or in-ground. ***CSI provides customers with what they need, not what we sell***.

Advancements in communication technology offer a wider variety of options for gaining access to customers, information resources, and video content. This also makes decisions related to network engineering, equipment selection and service partners more complex than ever. No other two companies in the region can offer the breadth of solutions and expertise under one roof. Our strategy stems from the vision of integrating communication and video tools in order to help our customers leverage their investment and establish a foundation for further growth and applications. Because each solution is different, and can include a variety of our products and services, it is difficult to catalogue all of our joint offerings. However, below is an overview of services provided by us today.

Wireless Solutions - CSI is the recognized leader in terrestrial wireless networking solutions in Nebraska and Iowa. Our team of design, installation and implementation experts, are focused on providing our customer base with the best vendor neutral solutions that are available to meet each customer's unique and specific needs. We are solution partners with many of the leading equipment providers in the world and have all the tools within our organization to provide turnkey network design, integration, installation, maintenance and support.

Video Surveillance – Video technology has progressed rapidly and today's options include a variety of cameras and software that allow you to tailor monitoring needs to any infrastructure and budget. Depending on the application, CSI engineers can deploy a video network that exceeds expectations.

Security offerings – Using an IP Network, CSI can deploy solutions that can be designed for the basics and beyond. Again, the flexibility of options allow our customers to choose from a diverse set of selections that can range from front and back door break in monitoring, full motion control, glass breaks, video cameras with remote viewing, water and temperature monitoring while you are away, and door access keypad solutions.

Structured Cabling Solutions - Nearly every solution offered by us requires low voltage cable installation. As the backbone of all of our products and services, we invest heavily in training our cabling technicians. Our staff includes an RCDD (Registered Communications Distribution Designer) professional as well as BICSI (Building Industry Consultant Service International) certified designers.

LAN and WAN Network Consulting and Design - Whether it is a Terrestrial Wireless solution or a Fiber Optic Network you can be assured that Communication Services, Inc. will provide you with the right solution to fit your organization's needs and budget.

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IP Network Design & Management – Internet Protocol (IP) networks are the fastest growing trend within communications. Our customers are utilizing a single network to support a variety of products and services such as video surveillance, Internet access, door access control and VoIP telephones. CSI helps our customers save on networking costs while simplifying the technology infrastructure needed to run operations. Our customers can take advantage of our 24/7 network monitoring services that offer remote tracking and monitoring of network performance.

Internet Bandwidth – CSI has unique partnerships with a variety of carriers both local and national that offer competitive pricing and a variety of distribution options. We currently distribute high speed Internet connectivity to our customers all over the Midwest.

Internet Connectivity – Whether wired or wireless, indoors or out, CSI can offer a variety of solutions to bring the Internet wherever you want it. Outdoor access is available through carefully designed networks to maximize throughput and convenience. Indoor "Wi-Fi" networks offer reliability and coverage that include the most current network security protocol. No other company in the region has more large indoor and outdoor Wi-Fi networks deployed.

Tower Construction, Installation CSI Tower is a leader in wireless tower erection and line and antenna installation for over 16 years. The addition of this unique services allows CSI to design and install wireless networks anywhere, at any height, and all with internal resources.

Telephony Services – CSI is a Regional Distribution Partner a number of leading telephone systems. This combination offers a variety of options to fit any budget or need. CSI offers both traditional, VoIP and hosted solutions.

Door Access Control – Using an IP Network, CSI deploys door access solutions that are customizable and easy to manage. Again, the flexibility of options allow our customers to choose from a diverse set of selections to control who gains access to buildings and internal rooms.

"Communications" isn't what it was 23 years ago and neither is CSI. We take great pride in being vendor neutral so that we can represent our customers, not the manufacturer. And with over 150 industry certifications for over 50 different product applications, you can be assured that a solution design from CSI represents the best of breed for our customers. The technology has changed, but our consultative approach has not, resulting in over 3,000 active customers throughout the region.

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OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED Managed WiFi Solution

[redacted]

[redacted]

Equipment List and Pricing for Kilgore Memorial Library

[redacted]

Signatures below express agreement to the terms of this Agreement.

Name:

_____ _____

Nebraskalink Date

Name: Verlyn Veldhouse

_____ _____

Communication Services, Inc. Date

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Kilgore Memorial Library
YORK, NEBRASKA

November 17, 2014

Hello,

This letter is in support of the application for grant funds from the Nebraska Public Service Commission by NebraskaLink and the Nebraska Library Commission. I am the director of the York Public Library, known locally as Kilgore Memorial Library, and if this grant is approved our library will receive high speed fiber optic service delivered to our building. This upgrade would be an answer to the number one issue on my needs list for this facility.

I have been working at Kilgore Memorial Library for one year and in that time I have upgraded all network services hardware, software managing networked systems, and internal wiring in an effort to provide stable connectivity to our patron and staff workstations. Just two weeks ago a technician from our current service provider shared that our building is the last service point on our line, so we will never have a stronger signal without upgrading. This was disheartening because we continue to get complaints from patrons about dropped connections and their frustrations of lost work while completing job applications or other online forms.

It has been suggested by our IT consulting firm that we consider upgrading to fiber optic services. So I know that receiving these network upgrades through this grant will have an enormous and positive impact on the services we provide at our library. Everyone who uses our wifi or wired computing services will be appreciative of the stronger, stable signal whenever they are using it.

I am very excited that our library is included in this grant application. If there are any other details I can share about our library or the potential impact of the funding for this grant please do not hesitate to reach out to me at drobertson@cityofyork.net or 402.363.2626.

Sincerely,

Debora Robertson

Director, Kilgore Memorial Library, York, Nebraska

Southeast community college
www.southeast.edu

AREA OFFICE: 301 SOUTH 68TH ST. PLACE, LINCOLN, NE 68510-2449, 402•323•3400
BEATRICE CAMPUS: 4771 W. SCOTT RD., BEATRICE, NE 68310-7042, 402•228•3468
LINCOLN CAMPUS: 8800 O ST., LINCOLN, NE 68520-1299, 402•471•3333
MILFORD CAMPUS: 600 STATE ST., MILFORD, NE 68405-8498, 402•761•2131

November 24, 2014

Mr. Mark Shaw
Chief Executive Officer
NebraskaLink, LLC
3900 NW 12th Street, Suite 100
Lincoln, NE 68521

Southeast Community College is pleased to support the Broadband Adoption Grant applications from NebraskaLink to the Nebraska Public Service Commission, and looks forward to partnering with NebraskaLink and the Nebraska Library Commission to provide technology training classes in Nebraska public libraries. We know that Nebraskans have indicated a need for technology training and that last year's library training partnership between community colleges and local libraries demonstrated the success of this approach. We learned that most Nebraskans prefer face-to-face workshops, with hands-on computer access—and Southeast Community College is uniquely positioned to provide this type of educational activity in the four communities selected for the pilot projects.

The educational programs provided by Southeast Community College can help address the factors that keep rural Nebraskans from full participation in the online world. These classes not only build the necessary skills, but also build confidence and help demonstrate the value and utilization potential of Internet access. Southeast Community College looks forward to this collaboration with NebraskaLink and the Nebraska Library Commission to help bridge the Digital Divide.

Amy Chesley

Amy Chesley, Dean
Continuing Education Division
Southeast Community College
301 South 68th Street Place
Lincoln, NE 68510

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Nebraska Library Commission

The Atrium • 1200 N St. • Suite 120 • Lincoln NE 68508-2023 • 402-471-2045 • Fax 402-471-2083 • nlc.nebraska.gov

November 21, 2014

Nebraska Public Service Commission:

This letter is provided in support of the NebraskaLink broadband project application. The Nebraska Library Commission is pleased to partner with NebraskaLink to demonstrate the impact this multiple component solution can have on communities. This initiative will contribute significantly to the goals and purposes set forth in the recently published ***Broadband in Nebraska: Current Landscape and Recommendations*** with public libraries as community anchor institutions identified among the ten recommendations.

The Nebraska Library Commission recently concluded a U.S. Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) grant, ***Library Broadband Builds Nebraska Communities***. The expertise developed through this three year, $3,668,189 project will be invaluable in the implementation of broadband adoption activities in Nebraska. Our experiences with this project provided vital lessons on how to serve "hard to reach" Nebraskans through the many-pronged approach of combining increasing **broadband infrastructure** with **wireless access**, and **digital literacy** education.

As part of this project initiative the Nebraska Library Commission will model the Digital Literacy training component on our recent enormously successful experience partnering with Nebraska Community Colleges. Demand and cost estimates for the pilot communities are based on this previous experience of providing digital literacy training through 484 computer application classes reaching 3,220 students for a total of 1,756 hours of instruction at 79 libraries. Quotes and anecdotal information from student and staff evaluations testify to the importance of this component.

This pilot project is an important step towards supporting and accelerating the deployment of broadband to all public libraries. When combined with the deployment of wireless access and digital literacy skills training through libraries, this approach has a proven track record as a game-changer in the effort to advance the goal of universal digital inclusion.

Sincerely,

Rod Wagner

Rod Wagner
Director