

# 17 MILLION IN 77 WORKING DAYS – CONNECTWYOMING PROJECT REVIEW

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# ConnectWY Overview

Gov. Mark Gordon authorized Federal CARES Act dollars to pay for broadband projects across Wyoming. The Wyoming Business Council Board of Directors approved 37 projects Aug. 14.

An **“unserved area”** is an area in which there exists no fixed terrestrial broadband service, or in which the maximum fixed terrestrial broadband speed available are:

- to residential customers:
  - speeds less than 25 megabits per second download and 3 megabits per second upload
- to business corridors within a municipality:
  - for a population of 2,000 or less, speeds less than 25 megabits per second download and 3 megabits per second upload
  - for a population of 2,000 or more, speeds less than 50 megabits per second download and 5 megabits per second upload
- to business corridors in an unincorporated area of a county:
  - speeds less than 25 megabits per second download and 3 megabits per second upload

**“Underserved areas”** are:

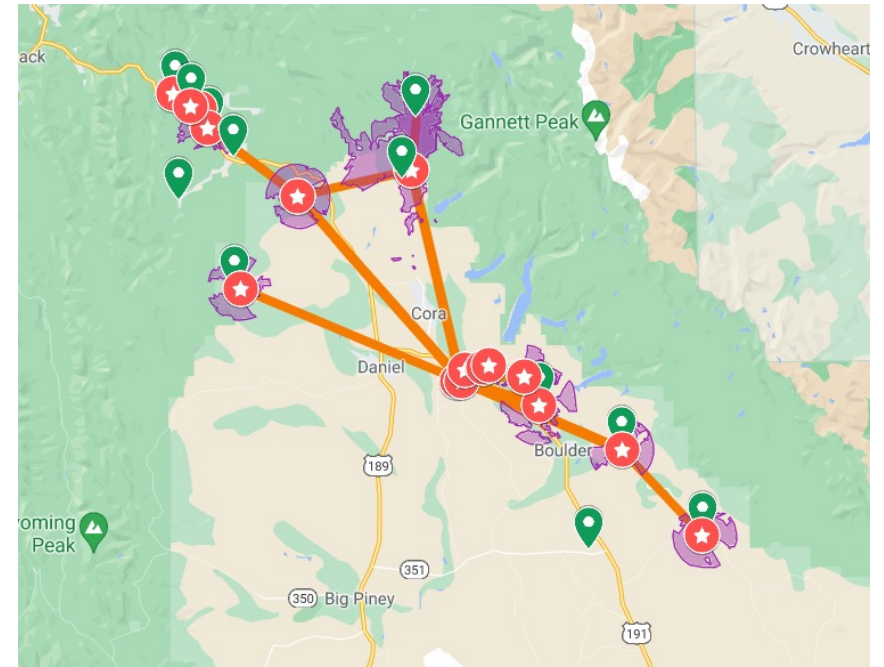
- areas of opportunity to be seized between the well-defined speeds of served and unserved as well as other issues related to redundancy, quality of service, affordability and customer satisfaction that need to be addressed to fulfill our mission, make our vision a reality and fully achieve our [moonshot](#).

Middle-mile and redundant fiber routes will also be a priority.



# Application Process

- Upon learning of fund, team assembled to identify proposed project areas
- No online application submission, all hand draft w mapping
- Goal: Meet un/underserved criteria areas with wireless or fiber solutions
- Visionary submitted 43 applications across the state of Wyoming, mostly in remote areas, or to increase redundancy



# Visionary's Awards

- 16 projects initially, another awarded after another provider declined it
- Approximately 17M in funding

## Deadlines

- External - Dec 31, all invoices submitted to the State of Wyoming
- Internal – Dec 28, all contractor invoices must be submitted to AP
- It's currently SEPTEMBER, winter is looming.



# Easement and Permitting Processes

Most rural landowners love to talk about High-Speed Broadband!



# Let's Go! Permits and Easements

## Easements

- 62 Easements obtained
  - 5 fiber easements
  - 57 wireless tower and access easements
- Always have plan B,C,D in progress
  - Only 1 wireless tower easement not obtained in time, but a dozen of them made it to or beyond Plan D

## Permits

- 59 new towers built
- Completed work on 95 towers
- Constructed 60.54 miles of Fiber





# Easements

When funding is upfront one-time money, recorded easements help you achieve a quicker return on your costs after funding.

- Determine the length of time for the easement
  - Lifetime
  - “X” amount of years
  - Months - for special access only during construction
- Determine the value based on geographic area, what is the standard
  - Service cost based (MRC x Term length)
  - Distance Based (per Rod payment)
  - Set fee based (budgeted amount)
- Check on existing easements for subject property
  - Run a title search on the property to check easements and to make sure the landownership is correct on all paperwork going forward



# Permitting and Records

- The type of permitting varies on scale of construction and local agency policies
  - FAA – flight path or distance from airport
  - County, City, Town
  - State
  - BLM
  - Forest Service
  - ❖ Electrical permits
  - ❖ Construction permits
  - ❖ Special Use Permits
- Find out what type of survey you will need to record the easement in the local governing agency records.
  - Be very specific with details with Survey company on the type of survey
    - ALTA/ACSM
    - Boundary
    - Construction
    - Location
    - Right-Of-Way
    - Topographic





# Inventory

- Check availability of products as you plan bids/builds, increase the cost by 20 to 30% (when the entire nation is getting funding supply is low and demand is high costs rise)
- Price comparison is not always an option when ordering in large quantities; example 57 Generac Generators with a deadline of delivery had to order what was in stock with different vendors.
- Be consistent in your design and equipment needed to complete fiber or tower construction. We now have 3 tower designs.
  - Plunk Tower
  - Guyed Tower
  - Self-Supporting Tower
  - This allows inventory to understand the items each tower will need to be constructed.
  - Cost can be estimated quickly for future projects
- Plan and secure inventory yard locations early and find rental companies in the area to help with unloading and loading contractors.
- Expect delays in Delivery and plan accordingly



# Inventory, Continued

- Order more than needed, Orders do get lost and not found for weeks.
- If product comes from overseas your supplier has no control when released from customs expect delays.
- Find alternative products in case of shortages
- Have a Good PO Tracking and Reporting System
- Keep inventory separated from regular stock – your moving fast and don't want to come up short
- Find hot shot companies in your area to go to warehouses and transport your product this ensures on-time delivery.



# Fiber Projects, Engineering, and Staff

What's your endgame?



# Projects

Visionary set out to build Fiber to the X (FTTx) in 4 townships, as well as middle mile and builds to multiple towers.

We had a larger overall vision, but....

- Define your project and what you want at the end
- Know what you will and won't get with the funding
- Be aware of the funding type limitations – what it can and can't pay for
- Be prepared to discuss internally the pitfalls



# Engineering

70% of the project's time is spent in some kind of engineering:

- Pre-planning or 'napkin design'
  - Boots-on-the-ground verification
  - Final design and "placing prints"
- 
- What kind of oversight are you offering? Is there clarity of purpose between internal and external staff?



# Staffing

Big projects require a bigger staff.

- Know what blend you will need in-house and externally
- Leave your decision makers in-house – they protect the company’s interests
- How will these projects affect future staffing?
  - Fiber needs maintained, located, and expanded upon – never just a one-time deal
  - Fiber labor shortages

