



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

Capitol Update

By Senator Howard Marklein

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Big Broadband Investments for Southwest WI

As you likely know, rural broadband expansion is one of my top priorities. The Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC) recently awarded \$1.9 million for four Rural Broadband Expansion Grant projects in Richland County and two other projects in Sauk and Juneau counties during the 2021 grant cycle. In total, the 17th Senate District received \$2,233,300 of the \$28,431,738 awarded statewide. Six of the 13 applications for our communities were funded.

I am thrilled that these grant funds will be going to areas that need it the most. The expansion into Richland, Sauk and Juneau counties will make a huge difference for the families I represent and is exactly the intent for this grant program.

I work on this issue every day and seek ways to help communities and telecommunications providers find ways to serve those who are unserved in Wisconsin. We made a huge investment in broadband in the last budget and I am very pleased that the funding coming to the 17th Senate District will serve unserved areas that are desperate for connection.

The grants to Richland County include the following projects:

Reedsburg Utility Commission – Highway 130 and Bear Valley Project

Total Project = \$860,300

Grant Award = \$327,000

Matching Funds = \$533,000

Project Description: The Highway 130/Bear Valley fiber project proposes extending gigabit fiber to the home along approximately 25 roadway miles throughout the unserved areas off of Highway 130 into Bear Valley.

Richland Grant Telephone Co-Op – Highway 80 Corridor Phase II

Total Project = \$1,725,000

Grant Award = \$690,000

Matching Funds = \$1,035,000

Project Description: The project proposes a fiber to the home network including 50 miles of main line fiber in a very rural area along Hwy 80 in Richland County. This fiber route will pass 225 locations. This is Phase II of a FY 2020 WI Broadband Grant project.

Richland Grant Telephone Co-Op – County Road Z

Total Project = \$1,250,000

Grant Award = \$500,000

Matching Funds = \$750,000

Project Description: This project proposes a fiber to the home network of 18 miles of main line fiber in a very rural area between Hwy 14 and Hwy 56 in Richland County. This fiber route will pass 145 locations.

Tech Com, Inc. – Richland County Phase II Fiber

Total Project = \$685,000

Grant Award = \$342,000

Matching Funds = \$343,000

Project Description: This project proposes a fiber to the home network of 18 miles of main line fiber in rural Richland County to about 155 locations in an unserved area. The fiber will include CTY A through the project area from Hwy 80 to County Z. Including an area north to County A to Hwy 56 and to Hwy 14.

The grants to other areas of the 17th Senate District include the following projects:

Reedsburg Utility Commission – Town of Lyndon

Total Project = \$105,350

Grant Award = \$40,000

Matching Funds = \$65,350

Project Description: Project proposes extending gigabit fiber to the home network along approximately three roadway miles in the Town of Lyndon, Juneau County. The project will include unserved areas of County HH, Dore Road, Sweeny Lane and Mitchell Road.

Reedsburg Utility Commission – River Valley Phase III

Total Project = \$986,300

Grant Award = \$334,300

Matching Funds = \$652,000

Project Description: The project is Phase 3 of the River Valley Fiber Project which proposes extending gigabit fiber to the home network along approximately 30 roadway miles in the northeastern quarter of the Town of Spring Green.

In addition to grant funding, I am also working on ways to improve the Rural Broadband Expansion Grant program so that it specifically targets unserved communities and continues to make strong investments. We need to revise some of the grant criteria to make sure we are reaching truly unserved people with fast speeds.

I will continue to work to expand rural broadband to the communities that need our support. We have made very good progress, but there are more, rural communities that are waiting to be connected and we are working hard to reach them.

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov. Do not hesitate to call (608) 266-0703 if you have any questions or need assistance with any state-related matters.