

ConnectKentucky Issues Request for Proposal for 'Coal to Broadband' Project



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*RFP Seeks Plans from All Types of Providers in Order to Bring Broadband Service to
Breathitt, Estill, Lee and Powell Counties*

Frankfort, KY— ConnectKentucky has issued a request for proposal for the build-out of a four-county broadband network in Eastern Kentucky, with the ultimate goal of providing high-speed Internet service to 7,000 unserved households.

In November 2009, Governor Steve Beshear joined with Department for Local Government Commissioner Tony Wilder, the Breathitt, Estill, Lee and Powell Regional Technology Authority Chairman Joe Crawford, and ConnectKentucky Executive Director René True to announce the launch of the “Coal to Broadband: Making the Transition, Making the Connection,” program, which will help bring broadband service to Breathitt, Estill, Lee, and Powell counties.

ConnectKentucky is serving as technical adviser on the project, working with the newly formed nonprofit, the Breathitt, Estill, Lee and Powell Regional Technology Authority (RTA).

All four of the grant’s impacted counties are in the bottom 25 counties in Kentucky for broadband availability. Breathitt and Lee counties are the two lowest served counties in the state, both with below 50 percent availability of broadband to the home. The RFP covers the infrastructure portion of the broadband project, with the ultimate goal of providing service to approximately 7,000 households in the four-county eastern Kentucky region without access to high-speed Internet.

The network design is based on using fixed-wireless technology; however, ConnectKentucky and the RTA encourage providers of all technology platforms to review the request for proposal and submit their best solution.

In addition, responses that include the combination of the construction phase of the project with a proposal for the operations phase from one company or a partnership of companies may provide the best solution and will receive favorable consideration in the review process.

“In the upcoming weeks, the RTA is looking forward to reviewing a variety of broadband project proposals. We appreciate ConnectKentucky’s technical assistance and guidance during this request for proposal process,” said Crawford. “The ultimate goal of the ‘Coal to Broadband’ project is to reach four of Kentucky’s lowest served counties with high-speed Internet. I strongly encourage providers of all types to submit their plans for completing this worthwhile effort.”

The deadline for responding to the RFP is April 5, 2010, and should be submitted to René True, c/o BELP, 311 West Main Street, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601 or e-mail at rtrue@connectky.org. The announcement of the winning RFP response will occur around May 7, 2010, with construction slated to start soon thereafter. It is estimated the entire construction build-out will take between 5-7 months.

As technical advisor, ConnectKentucky guided the preparation of the RFP and will assist the RTA in understanding the technical aspects of the RFP responses. However, the selection of a provider from the RFP responses is the ultimate responsibility of the RTA and the evaluation team appointed by the RTA.

“ConnectKentucky is proud to be part of the ‘Coal to Broadband’ project and helping to facilitate this request for proposal. This project is going to bring high-speed Internet service to families and businesses in four counties where it is desperately needed and will play an important role in diversifying the region’s economy,” said True. “We look forward to working with the RTA and the successful RFP respondent to provide broadband to the region.”

For a complete copy of the RFP and additional project information, please check the website at <http://www.connectbelp.org/>.

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Related Links:

Press Release: [Governor Beshear Announces Grant to Provide Broadband Access to Eastern Kentucky Region \(11/03/09\)](#)

About ConnectKentucky: ConnectKentucky is leading the way into a new economy for Kentuckians. As an independent technology-based economic development organization, ConnectKentucky works to ensure that Kentucky remains the place of choice to live, work, and raise a family. ConnectKentucky is an alliance of technology-minded businesses, government entities, and universities working together to accelerate technology in the Commonwealth.

About Regional Technology Authority: The Regional Technology Authority is a four-county nonprofit consortium formed to foster broadband and technology

availability and adoption to improve the economic conditions and quality of life in the counties of Breathitt, Estill, Lee and Powell. The Authority is taking the lead to identify funding sources to facilitate the deployment and operation of a four-county broadband network.