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October 25, 2011

John Van Eschen  
Manager, Telecommunications  
Missouri Public Service Commission

RE: Case No. TW-2012-0362

Dear Mr. Van Eschen:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on issues regarding maximizing broadband deployment in Missouri. The City of Poplar Bluff already provides broadband to its citizens, in addition to the various for-profit entities that operate in and around the city. It looks forward to the day when its citizens can connect with everyone else in the state by means of broadband.

As the State seeks to expand broadband deployment and availability, it should encourage other municipalities to also participate. In particular, cities like Poplar Bluff that have their own electricity distribution systems are well positioned to work with the State. But other cities may also be interested. The involvement of cities will help keep broadband affordable, given the absence of a need to derive a profit from such facilities. Furthermore, cities would provide diversity in connectivity so that for-profit entities do not control the "last mile" as a sole source.

Even cities that do not otherwise want to participate could be encouraged to at least provide connectivity to their governmental, police and fire department sites, in order to improve communications during times of emergency or security threats.

Cities could be separately responsible for their own facilities, or could form working groups to cooperate regarding infrastructure management, equipment inventories, maintenance and emergency repairs.

The City of Poplar Bluff and other cities that already provide broadband could help the State and even more cities to get involved, including by developing guidelines for system development and service standards.

Let me know if you have any questions. Thanks again.

Sincerely,

William Bach  
General Manager