

SCTelcom Approved for Broadband Acceleration Grant Program, (March 11, 2021).

SCTelcom is happy to announce they have been awarded funding under the Broadband Acceleration Grant Program to address the increased need for Internet connectivity in Kansas in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Broadband Acceleration Grant Program was created to bring critically needed broadband access to Kansas communities. Funded through the Kansas Department of Transportation's Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program (IKE), the Office of Broadband Development administers the program to make more 'last-mile' connections possible across the state.

SCTelcom has recently finished a fiber expansion in Barber, Harper, and Pratt counties under the Connectivity Emergency Response Grant to address the increased need for Internet connectivity in Kansas. The funds received were used to serve unserved and under-served areas to address the needs of telework, telehealth, distance learning and other remote business services.

The additional funds received under the Broadband Acceleration Grant will be used to support projects in Barber and Pratt Counties. However, SCTelcom will also be making investments for projects in Harper and Kingman counties as well.

"This award allows SCTelcom to continue to invest in our neighbors. We realize the impact of reliable connections and are proud to extend our robust fiber optic network to rural areas in Barber, Harper and Pratt counties that may not otherwise have been reached," CEO, Carla Shearer said.

SCTelcom was notified of the award on March 11, 2021 by Governor Laura Kelly at a press conference held in McFarland, Kansas. This first year of the 10-year program initiated by Governor Kelly invests \$5 million in grants with another \$5 million in matching contributions from the awardees, resulting in a \$10 million total investment into various communities across the state. These projects were selected following a competitive funding round, and all proposed projects were made available for public review. To encourage input, a public comment period was included in the process, ensuring transparency and community feedback in the process of making awards.

Andrea Fischer, owner of the Gyp Hills Guest Ranch, is excited about the new opportunities' fiber will bring to her business. "As our business grows, we will greatly benefit from the reliability and speeds that fiber provides. By having access to faster service, we can host live stream events for our customers and community. It opens up endless possibilities."

SCTelcom will start with construction of the main fiber line and then move to individual service drops to each residence and business.

To keep the community informed during construction, SCTelcom will provide updates on the company's Facebook page and website.

If you are interested in high-speed fiber Internet, please visit our website at www.sctelcom.net. You can start the process by entering your address. You can also contact our office at 877-723-6875.