

### **Dalton Telephone company dba Highline Experience:**

Dalton Telephone Company (DTC) dba Highline established in 1898, is a rural local exchange/communications company in western Nebraska serving 1,025 customers throughout Dalton, Gurley, Lodgepole, Dix and Bushnell. DTC covers 1,400 square miles across six counties. DTC has provided voice communications for over a century and in the last two and half decades began providing internet services. DTC has delivered communication services within the region of the proposed project area and has demonstrated the ability to install, operate, and maintain networks to support its service offerings.

Due to this long-standing relationship, the State of Nebraska is provided with a solid investment opportunity in the future of its broadband infrastructure and the digital equity of its residents. DTC understands the challenges of operating in the proposed project area and has proven it has the resources and expertise necessary for a successful outcome.

Dalton accepted the initial FCC ACAM offer that provided DTC an opportunity to upgrade their current broadband infrastructure to 25/3. While these improvements have benefitted these locations, the current broadband speeds do not compare with other markets and do not provide the community with the needed speeds to support online education, telehealth visits or the ability to promote growth for local businesses. Without broadband infrastructure improvements, the Lodgepole community will likely lag impacting their rural population and the ability for the community to thrive.

### **Project Description of the Proposed Network Architecture:**

DTC is proposing a Broadband Fiber to the Premise build that will provide 201 locations in the Lodgepole area with broadband speed improvements up to 1Gbps symmetrical speeds with the potential to provide multi-gigabit service. This project is a fiber build that will replace outdated AFC/Tellabs DSLAM Technology that was installed 20 + years ago. The current infrastructure is limited to 99 Mbps Download and is comprised of copper facilities that are 40 + years old.

DTC's fiber optic network and Calix XGS-PON platform will provide service to the project's locations with a scalable and upgradeable capacity meeting customers' demands and expectations for the foreseeable future. Through increased broadband speeds, the proposed project will provide residential locations with a reliable and robust internet allowing them to work from home, provide businesses with reliable access to ecommerce opportunities, ensure children have access to online learning for K-12 and the ability to pursue higher education, and lastly, provide much needed reliable access to Telehealth at this crucial time in facing health management challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program Grant funding is needed to implement the proposed project because Dalton Telephone Company (DTC) cannot support the cost of the proposed project for the full amount of the capital. The total estimated project cost is \$1,584,126. DTC will contribute \$237,619 in matching funds equal to 15% of the total project cost. As such, DTC is requesting \$1,346,507 in grant funding from the State of Nebraska.

DTC provides robust broadband with speeds up to 1Gbps symmetrical speeds with potential to provide multi-gigabit service, ensuring customers have access to vital services and every opportunity in today's digital world. DTC is committed to bringing the power of fiber-enabled internet to our community.

### **Network Operation/Local Staff/Customer Service:**

DTC has a team of three local staff members that collectively have over 60 years of experience in broadband internet and are dedicated to the highest quality of services for their customers as well as a force of over 200 employees company wide. The staff involved in the design, deployment, and maintenance of these services have been involved at all levels of multiple projects utilizing similar approaches for the planned implementation for this project.

The services provided by Dalton Telephone Company for more than 20 years have drastically evolved to meet or exceed the requests and requirements of our customers. DTC operates and maintains all our networks with the highest quality equipment and procedures to ensure success. DTC dba Highline has the customer service team and resources that guarantee customer reliable internet come first. We are committed to the communities we serve, and our teams work in the towns we serve. We aren't five states over—we are in the local community to ensure our service is everything you want and need it to be.

### **Network Management:**

DTC manages and maintains its local network 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. All outages are assessed and remedied as a priority. The local technicians work with our Network Operations team to ensure that the entire network is operating efficiently and with more than adequate capacity to meet customer needs. The proposed project is designed to meet the technical and bandwidth requirements of customers for the foreseeable future with multi-gigabit capability of Calix XGS-PON.

DTC has completed projects previously requiring management in these areas and has not had any legal, right-of-way, or permitting issues nor do they anticipate any with this proposed broadband infrastructure build. DTC has been in business since 1898 and will continue to support its customers well into the future. Given this history, DTC has the experience and expertise to support and maintain this fiber to the premise infrastructure build over the foreseeable future.

