BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Nebraska Public Service Commission, on its own motion, seeking to administer the Nebraska Universal Service Fund’s Broadband Program: Application to the Nebraska Broadband Program Received from Cox Nebraska Telcom, LLC and the Salvation Army.

APPLICATION NO. NUSF-92.22

PREFILED TESTIMONY OF ROBERT LOGSDON

ON BEHALF OF

COX NEBRASKA TELCOM, LLC

MARCH 27, 2015
I. Intro/Background of Witness

Q. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS FOR THE RECORD.
A. My name is Robert Logsdon and my business address is 11505 West Dodge Road, Omaha, NE 68154.

Q. ON WHOSE BEHALF ARE YOU PROVIDING THIS TESTIMONY?
A. I am testifying on behalf of the applicant, Cox Nebraska Telcom, LLC. Cox is certificated by this Commission to provide local exchange and interexchange telecommunications services in Nebraska. I will refer to Cox Nebraska Telcom, LLC as “Cox” throughout my testimony. I am here also to reflect the support of the application on behalf of the Salvation Army of Omaha, Nebraska.

Q. WHAT ARE YOUR DUTIES WITH COX AND HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY TESTIFIED BEFORE ANY GOVERNMENTAL BODIES?
A. My duties include managing regulatory affairs for Cox in the states of Nebraska, Iowa, Idaho, Kansas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. I oversee tariff filings in these states, as well as regulatory compliance. I've testified before this Commission and the Iowa Utilities Board. I have also testified before the Nebraska Legislature’s Transportation and Telecommunications Committee.

Q. PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR RELEVANT EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATIONAL HISTORY.
A. I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln in 1981. From 1989 to 2000, I worked at the Nebraska Public Service Commission, first in the Transportation Department and later as the Commission’s Executive Director. I left the Public Service
Commission in 2000 to work for Cox and have served as the Director of
Regulatory Affairs since that time.

Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY?
A. The purpose of my testimony is to provide information to the Commission that
supports granting Application NUSF-92.22, which is a request to receive NUSF
funds to support a broadband adoption project in Omaha, Nebraska in partnership
with the Salvation Army.

II. Background on Cox Nebraska Telcom, LLC
Q. BRIEFLY DESCRIBE COX AND ITS PROVISION OF SERVICES IN
NEBRASKA.
A. Cox started offering voice telecommunications services in the Omaha
metropolitan area in 1997. Cox was one of the first companies to file an
application in Nebraska to obtain a Certificate of Public Convenience and
Necessity to operate as a competitive local exchange carrier. Cox’s authority to
operate as a competitive local exchange carrier was later supplemented with the
designation of being named an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (“ETC”) allowing Cox to participate in the Nebraska Telecommunications Assistance
Program (“NTAP”) and provide discounted voice telephone services to low-
income persons. Since that time, Cox has since grown to become one of
Nebraska’s largest telephone providers serving approximately 20% of the state’s
wireline access lines. Cox has a state-of-the-art switching center in Omaha that
provides not only voice telephone services as described above, but also cable
television and broadband to customers.
III. Support for Application

Q. WERE YOU INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS APPLICATION THAT WAS FILED WITH THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION ON NOVEMBER 6, 2014?

A. Yes. I oversaw the preparation of the application and the exhibit and I was involved in its drafting.

Q. PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR APPLICATION.

A. Cox seeks support to bring broadband services to low-income consumers via a partnership with the Salvation Army of Omaha, Nebraska. Specifically, Cox requests support to construct and operate a public computer lab at the Salvation Army Material Assistance and Seasonal Services (“MASS”) facility that is being built at 6101 NW Radial Highway. This new MASS facility is being constructed in a former Walgreens store. It will have ample parking, is near the city bus line and is located in an area in Omaha where many of the residents live in poverty. Broadband speeds of 28 Mbps on the downlink and 4 Mbps on the uplink will be available to the public at the facility, free of charge.

Specifically, the application seeks funding to construct and install a public computer work station in the MASS facility, to purchase five (5) computers and their related hardware and software, a printer, a router, one (1) year of high-speed Internet service and to employ an individual(s) to assist computer users and to teach group Internet classes and to provide computer administrative support.

Throughout my testimony, I will refer to the entire project as the “computer lab”.

The total sum being requested in this application is $30,210.
Q. **WILL COX BE PROVIDING A FINANCIAL MATCH?**

A. Although a financial match is not required of participants in the NUSF-92 broadband adoption program, Cox will provide the Salvation Army with a 10% discount off the price of broadband service for this project for one (1) year.

Q. **WILL GRANTING THIS APPLICATION MAKE BROADBAND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO CONSUMERS WHO MAY NOT OTHERWISE HAVE ACCESS TO BROADBAND?**

A. Absolutely. It is well documented by the Pew Research Center and others that low-income households lack access to broadband compared to higher-income households. The computer lab will be placed in a facility where low-income people come to receive assistance and benefits. The MASS facility offers food pantry assistance, clothing, household items, prescription medications, utility assistance, fire victim’s assistance and referral services. Most of the individuals who use the services of the MASS facility have low-to-no income, with some being homeless or at-risk of being homeless. The computer lab will be available to anyone, free of charge during regular business hours.

Q. **POTENTIAL USERS AT THE MASS FACILITY MAY HAVE NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE USING COMPUTERS. DOES THE APPLICATION ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF DIGITAL LITERACY?**

A. Yes. Cox recognizes that a genuine barrier exists for users who have no prior computer experience and lack digital literacy. Accordingly, the budget accompanying the application included a request for funds that would be used by the Salvation Army to employ an individual who will assist users individually and teach group classes. In Cox’s experience, successful adoption programs involve more than just offering service at reduced or no cost. Programs must also provide
assistance to those who may have no prior experience working with computers and the Internet. Without assistance, users may become frustrated and stop using the service, regardless that it is free and readily available. This application addresses that problem.

Q. DO YOU HAVE AN ESTIMATE HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL UTILIZE THE COMPUTER LAB?
A. In 2013, 27,486 individuals visited the Salvation’s Army’s current MASS facility for help with things such as food and pantry items, electric fans, backpacks and school supplies, energy and utility aid. That is a 36% increase from the attendance experienced at the MASS facility in 2012. The computer lab will be available, free of charge, to anyone who visits the MASS facility during regular business hours.

Q. WHAT IS THE CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE FOR THE COMPUTER LAB?
A. As previously stated, the computer lab will be located in a building that was formerly a Walgreen store. Construction is scheduled to begin next month (April) and the Salvation Army hopes that the new facility, including the computer lab will be open to the public by mid-summer.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY THOUGHTS ON THE COMMISSION STAFF’S RECOMMENDATIONS?
A. Cox and the Salvation Army are very grateful to have received a recommendation from staff to receive funding in full for this project. Both parties commit to fulfill all expectations required of recipients including using support only for the purposes which have been approved by the Commission, to fulfill all reporting
and audit requirements related to the application and to abide by all applicable Commission rules, regulations and orders.

**Q. WILL APPROVAL OF THIS APPLICATION FURTHER AND PROMOTE THE PUBLIC INTEREST AND UNIVERSAL SERVICE IN NEBRASKA?**

**A.** Yes. Research consistently shows broadband in the home is less prevalent for people who have lower household incomes and educational attainment. College graduates are much more likely to have broadband in the home compared to adults who have not completed high school. Having the computer lab at the MASS facility enables visitors to search for employment and housing and to further their education on a high-speed Internet connection, free of charge. The MASS facility is located in an impoverished neighborhood making it convenient and accessible to low-income citizens of all ages. The MASS facility provides other benefits and many forms of assistance to low-income persons, so locating the computer lab at this location will optimize access for the target audience. Finally, critical to the success of this project is the inclusion in the budget of an employee who will assist users individually and teach computer classes. Assistance and instructional classes will be available free of charge. The application furthers the goal of deploying broadband service to all consumers, including low-income consumers.

**IV. Conclusion**

**Q. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR TESTIMONY?**

**A.** Yes.