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## County of El Paso Agenda Item Details

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<b>Item Title:</b>	Economic Development - USDA ReConnect Cotton Valley Connect Broadband Project Offer Letter (Contract No. 2024-0617)
<b>Submitted By:</b>	Roberto Ransom, Director
<b>Department:</b>	Economic Development
<b>Department Phone Number:</b>	915-546-2177
<b>Subject:</b>	Approve and authorize the County Judge to sign the award offer letter from the United States Department of Agriculture in the amount of \$2,850,000 for the implementation of the Cotton Valley Connect broadband project. No County funds are required. (Contract No. 2024-0617)
<b>Background:</b>	<p>Congresswoman Veronica Escobar announced the inclusion of \$2.8 million in funding for the Cotton Valley Connect Project in the Fiscal Year 2022 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee Appropriations bill.</p> <p>This funding would be used by El Paso County to provide reliable access to public broadband service, via wireless mesh service, to an estimated 3,256 students across Fabens and Tornillo ISDs. Staff has submitted all requirements to the USDA and been offered an award letter and grant agreement. This item is only for the acceptance and approval of the award letter, as the grant agreement is currently under review by staff and the County Attorney's Office.</p>
<b>Fiscal Impact:</b>	<p>Fiscal Impact Historical n/a</p> <p>Fiscal Impact Projected n/a</p> <p>Long Account Number: Amount:</p> <p>Long Account Number: Amount:</p>
<b>Budget or Unbudgeted Match:</b>	No match

**Recommendation:**

Approve and authorize the County Judge to sign the award offer letter from the United States Department of Agriculture in the amount of \$2,850,000 for the implementation of the Cotton Valley Connect broadband project. No County funds are required. (Contract Number #2024-0617).

**Prior Action:**

3/25/24: Approve and authorize the County Judge to sign the necessary certifications to comply with the USDA ReConnect Program requirements to receive funding for the Cotton Valley Connect broadband community project. (Contract No. 2024-0265).

1/08/24: Approve and authorize the County Judge to sign an agreement with Insight Public Sector, Inc. to provide technical grant application assistance and project design and installation services as part of the Cotton Valley Connect broadband community project. (Contract No. 2023-0884)

8/21/23: (ARP-1150) Approve the purchase of Cotton Valley Connect Broadband Project for the County of El Paso using Equalis Group Purchasing Program-Region 10 Education Service Center Proposal EQ-013120-01, awarded to Insight Public Sector, Inc. of Tempe, Arizona in the amount of \$2,798,761.26. Funding is available in SG-ARPLAN21-OPERATING EX.

**Strategic Plan:**

Goal:

2. Transform Economic Development

Objective:

2.1 Develop Community Broadband service

**Strategic Plan Information:**

n/a

**Estimated Time Needed  
For This Item:**



**Rural Development**

Rural Utilities Service

1400 Independence Ave SW  
Room 4121 Stop 1590  
Washington, DC 20250

Voice 202.720.0800

July 29, 2024

Mr. Cristian Martinez  
Senior Research Analyst  
500 E. San Antonio  
El Paso, Texas 79901

Dear Mr. Martinez:

To implement your Congressionally Directed Spending award in the amount of \$2,850,000 we are providing the attached grant award documents. The grant designation for your project is TX 1714 A70. This designation should be referenced in all future correspondence concerning this grant.

It is acceptable for ReConnect awardees to order materials and enter into engineering contracts prior to the commencement of "work". However, applicants must request permission to purchase the materials and must submit the engineering contracts for approval and must be informed that any purchases completed, or contracts entered into before all environmental clearances have been obtained are at their own risk and that RUS has no obligation to reimburse these purchases.

Also, please find attached a copy of your RUS approved budget and a draft copy of your Grant Agreement. Please have your legal counsel review and respond to RUS within 10 business days if there are any errors with respect to information added by the agency. Note that the standard agreement is non-negotiable.

Please indicate your acceptance of this offer by having the president or other authorized official sign this letter, and within five (5) days from the date hereof, returning it by email to:

RANDALL MILLHISER  
Deputy Assistant Administrator  
Loan Origination and Approval Division  
Telecommunications Program  
Rural Utilities Service

Email: [SM.ReConnect.CDS@usda.gov](mailto:SM.ReConnect.CDS@usda.gov)

Upon receipt of the signed copy of this letter and notification of any errors in your grant agreement, the grant documents will be prepared and forwarded in the near future for execution. This grant is approved with the understanding that the grant

documents will be authorized and executed by your organization and returned to us within the time period which will be set forth in the letter of transmittal.

Sincerely,

Andrew Berke  
Administrator  
Rural Utilities Service

ACCEPTANCE:

Grantee

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosures:

Draft Grant and Security Agreement  
Environmental Clearance Letter

A.A#: RECON #590