



# Kick Start Sheridan

102 N. Oak Street • Sheridan, AR 72150 • (870) 942-2231

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December 5, 2020

Dear UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation:

Please find the attached application for the Rural Broadband Grant for the Grant County Rural Broadband Feasibility Study Project. Kick Start Sheridan is excited about the opportunity to apply for this grant on behalf of our community. We are looking forward to working with you on this grant opportunity. If you have any questions regarding our application please contact me at (870) 942-2231.

Sincerely,

Brad McGinley  
Co-Chair

**Rural Broadband I.D. Trust Fund Program  
Cover Sheet**

**Applicant Name:** Kick Start Sheridan

**Applicant Address:** 102 N. Oak, Sheridan, AR 72150

**Applicant Phone Number:** (870) 942-2231

**Applicant Email Address:** bmcginley@uaex.edu

**Applicant Tax ID or EIN Number:** 83-3186422

**Key Contact Person:** Brad McGinley

**Total Amount Requested:** \$75,000

**Project Description:**

Grant County, Arkansas has 18,265 residents and the northern edge of the county is located only 20 miles from the Little Rock Metropolitan area. However, even with the proximity to the state's largest population center only 61.1% of residents have access to one internet service provider other than satellite providers with limited bandwidth. Grant County is a growing community with many residents commuting to Little Rock, Pine Bluff, and Hot Springs for work. In order sustain the new development and growth, Kick Start Sheridan was formed to bring community leaders, elected officials, and residents together to help plan for the future growth of Sheridan, Grant County, and the Sheridan School District.

In 2018, Kick Start Sheridan underwent a strategic planning process to develop a strategic blueprint for the growth and development of the community of Sheridan, Grant County, and the Sheridan School District over the next five years. This action plan was created as a result of public forums and action teams working together over a nine month period to identify a vision and goals for the community, as well as promising long-term strategic opportunities. Affordable and reliable broadband access was a major issue identified during this process and the Infrastructure action team has made this a high priority for the community.

With this proposal, Kick Start Sheridan will initiate the Grant County Rural Broadband Feasibility Study Project. With this project we will:

- Contract with a broadband consulting firm to conduct a broadband feasibility study to include: a survey of available technologies; financial costs and funding requirements; available service speeds and costs; a proposed design approach.
- Bring together internet service providers, local leaders, and elected officials to work toward improving broadband availability in Grant County.
- Utilize the existing Kick Start Sheridan Infrastructure Action Team as a broadband task force to help prioritize broadband deployment and help meet the needs of businesses and the general public.

# Project Narrative

## Introduction (up to 30 points)

### Proposed Service Area

This proposal will include census tracts 4701, 4702, and 4703.

House Unit  More Data Points...

Boundary Color:  Kinks:  Pattern:

**Population**

**Areas and Data**

UAID	Name	Data	Actions
434551	Census Tract 4701	5008	
434550	Census Tract 4702	3197	
434552	Census Tract 4703	3994	
434549	Census Tract 4704	5654	

Source: [www.usboundary.com](http://www.usboundary.com)

Search:

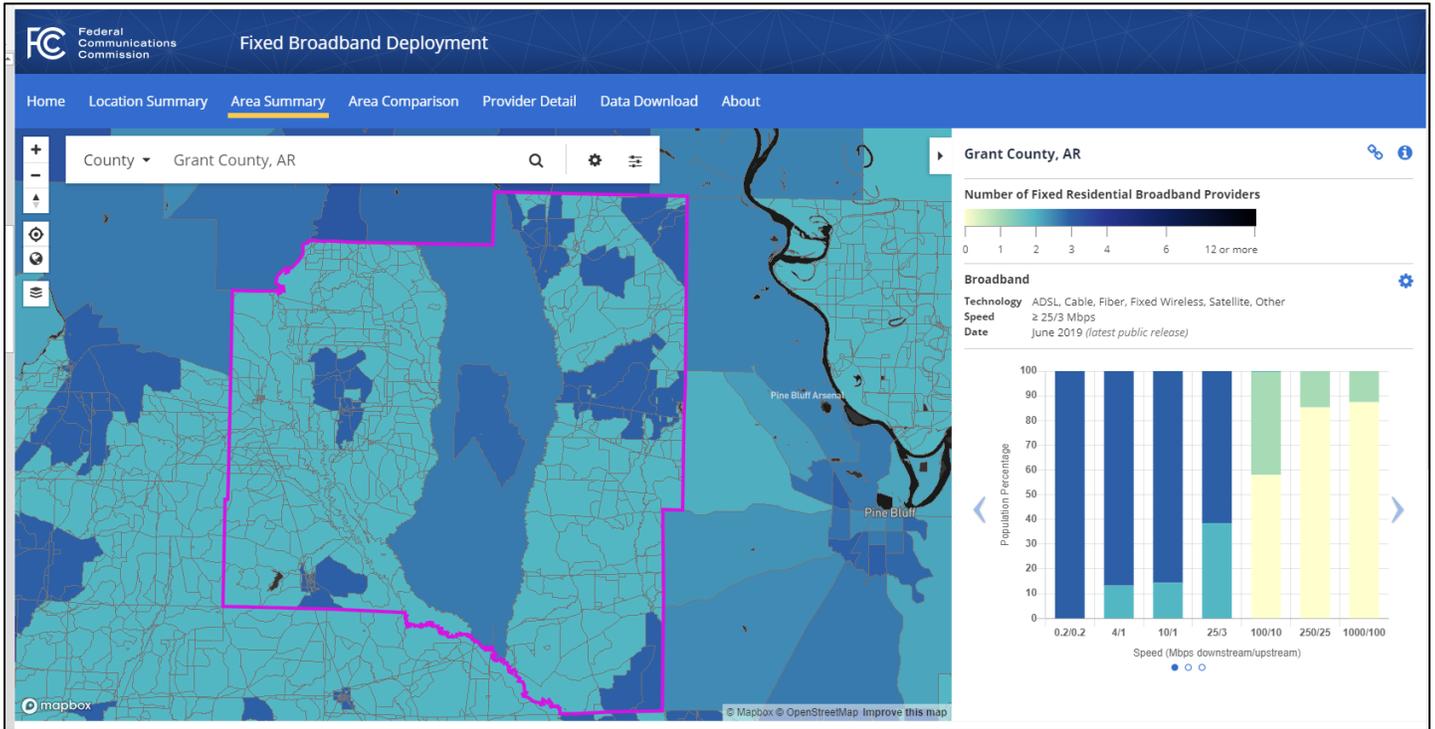
\*\* Data Exporting/Importing does not work well on IE \*\*

On the Map

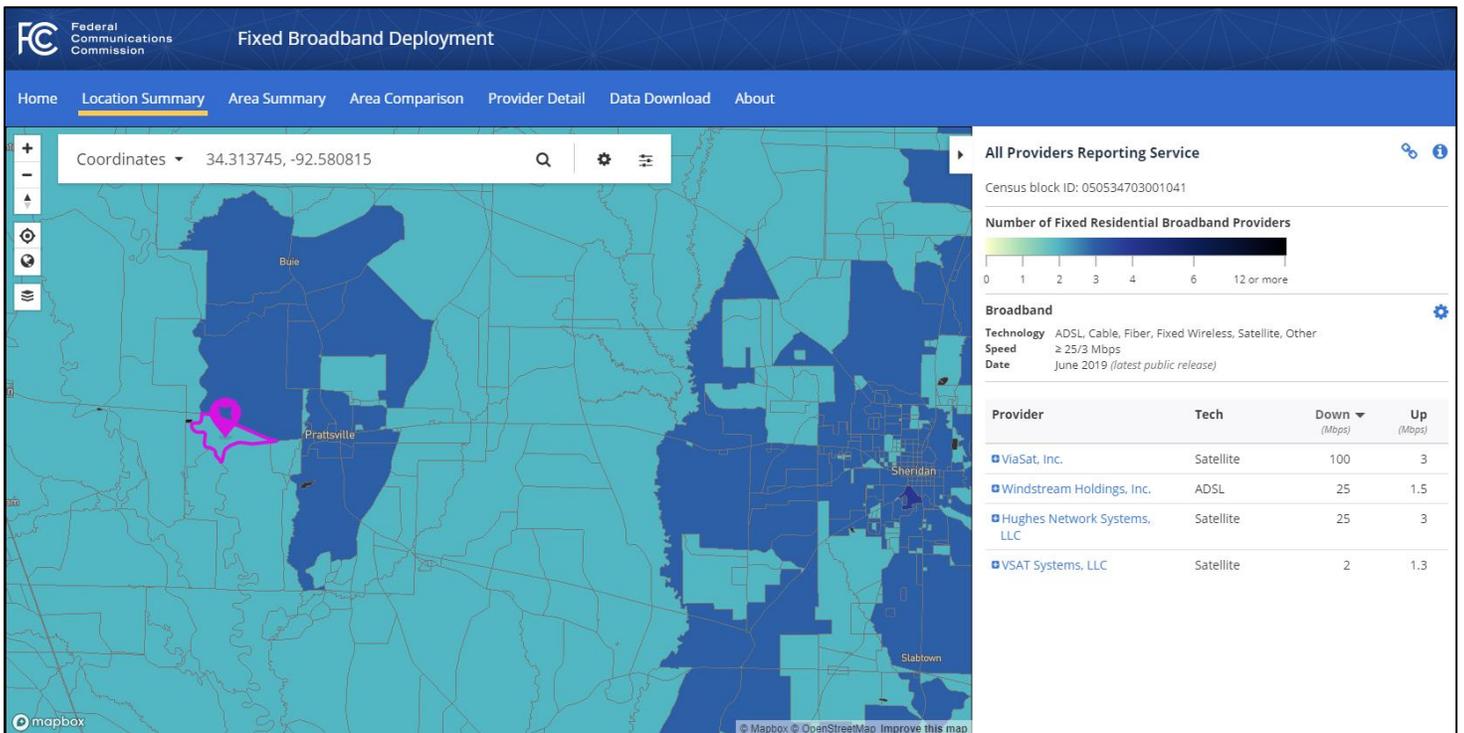
Render

- 3197 - 3197
- 3994 - 3994
- 5008 - 5008
- 5654 - 5654

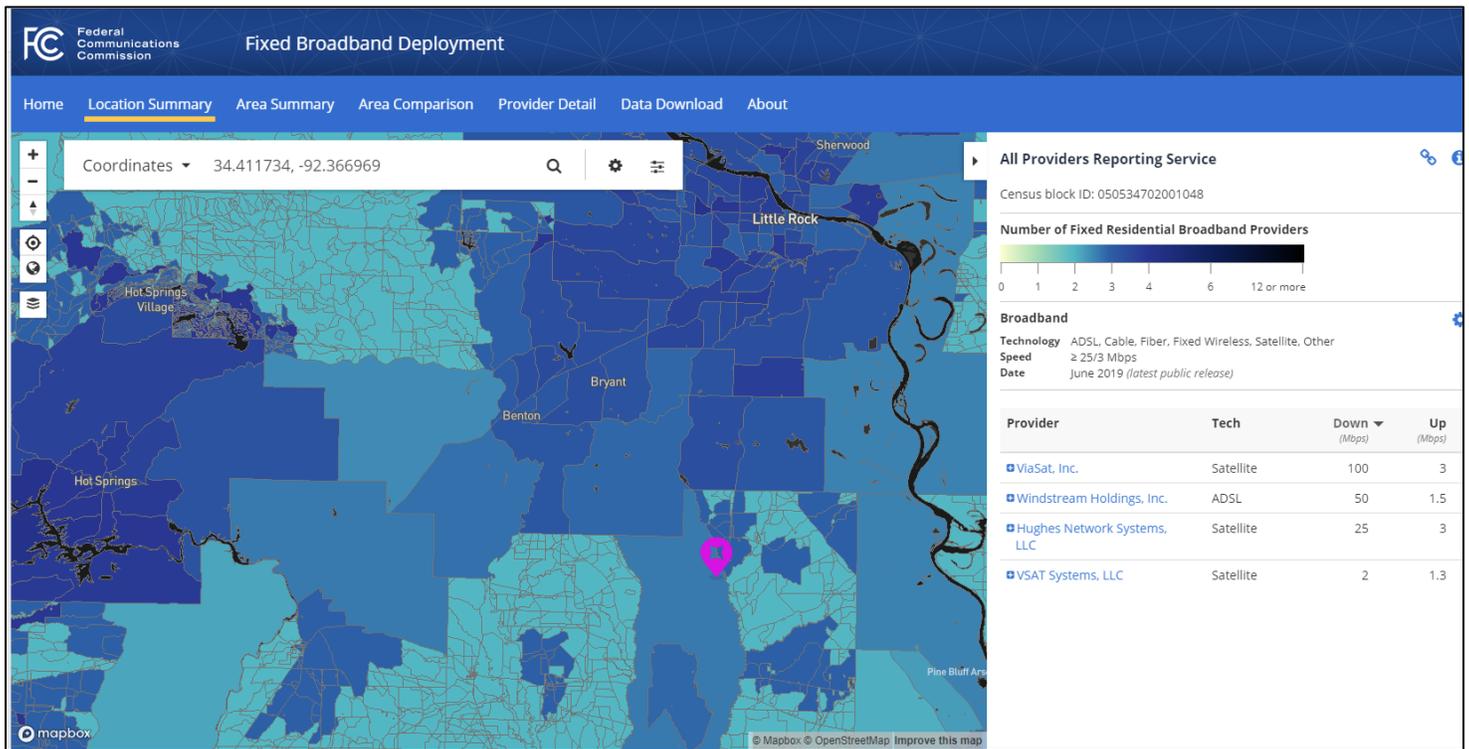
Percent of your proposed service area that is unserved by 25/3 broadband



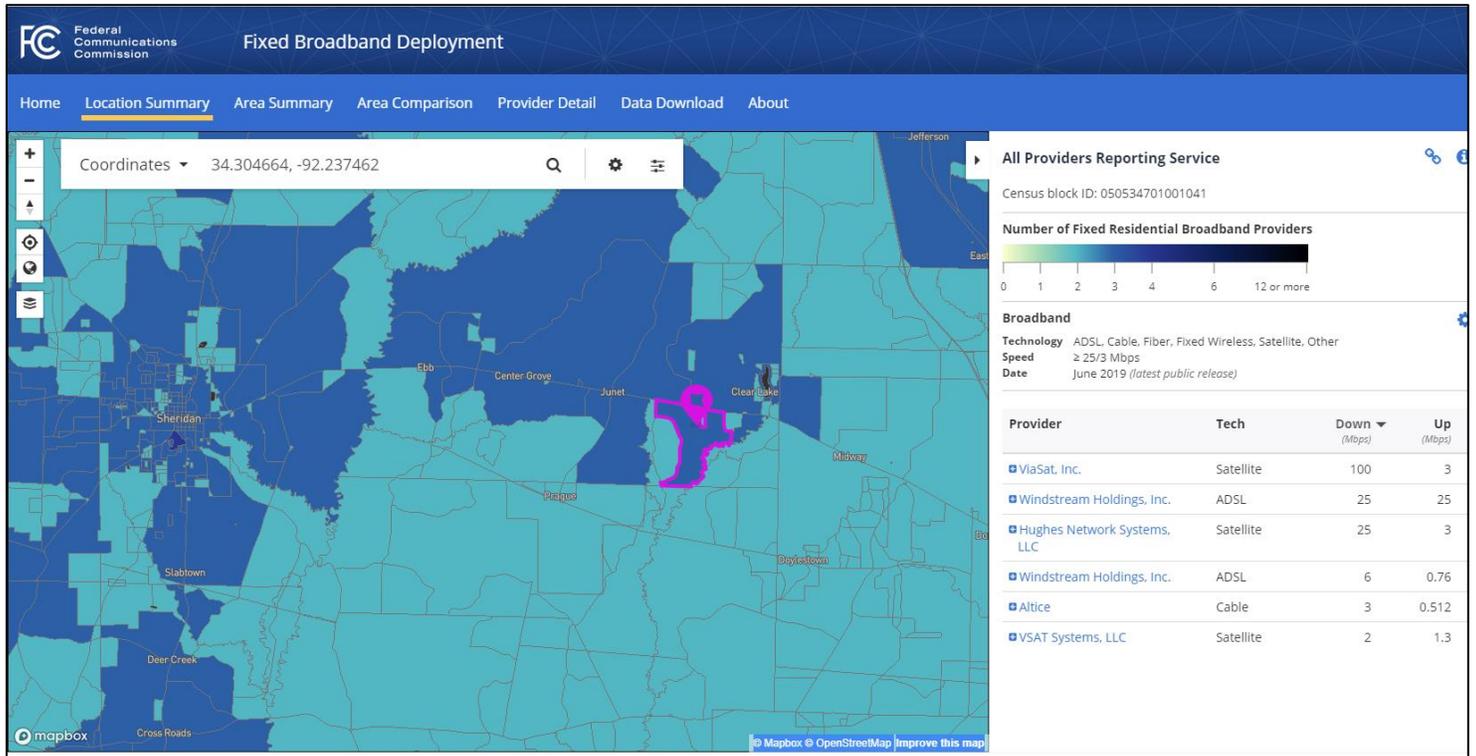
The above map shows that only 61.49% of Grant County residents have access to 3 or more providers with 25/3 broadband access, with 2 of the 3 providers being satellite providers. 38.51% of residents only access to, two providers with both of those being satellite providers with limited bandwidth.



The above maps shows a sample area from census track 4703 only one mile from the town of Prattville. Again the only 25/3 broadband access in this location come from satellite providers. While satellite providers do offer some limited options for rural broadband access, however plans are often expensive with data caps.



The above map shows a sample location from census tract 4702. This location is approximately 10 miles north of Sheridan and 25 miles south of the Little Rock Metro Area. Again only two 25/3 providers are available with both of those being satellite providers. The northern part of the county is a prime location for future development due to its proximity to Benton, Bryant, and Little Rock. However, the lack of broadband access could hinder future development.



The above map shows a location in census tract 4701 approximately 8 miles east of Sheridan on Highway 270. Again only three internet service providers are available, with two being satellite providers.

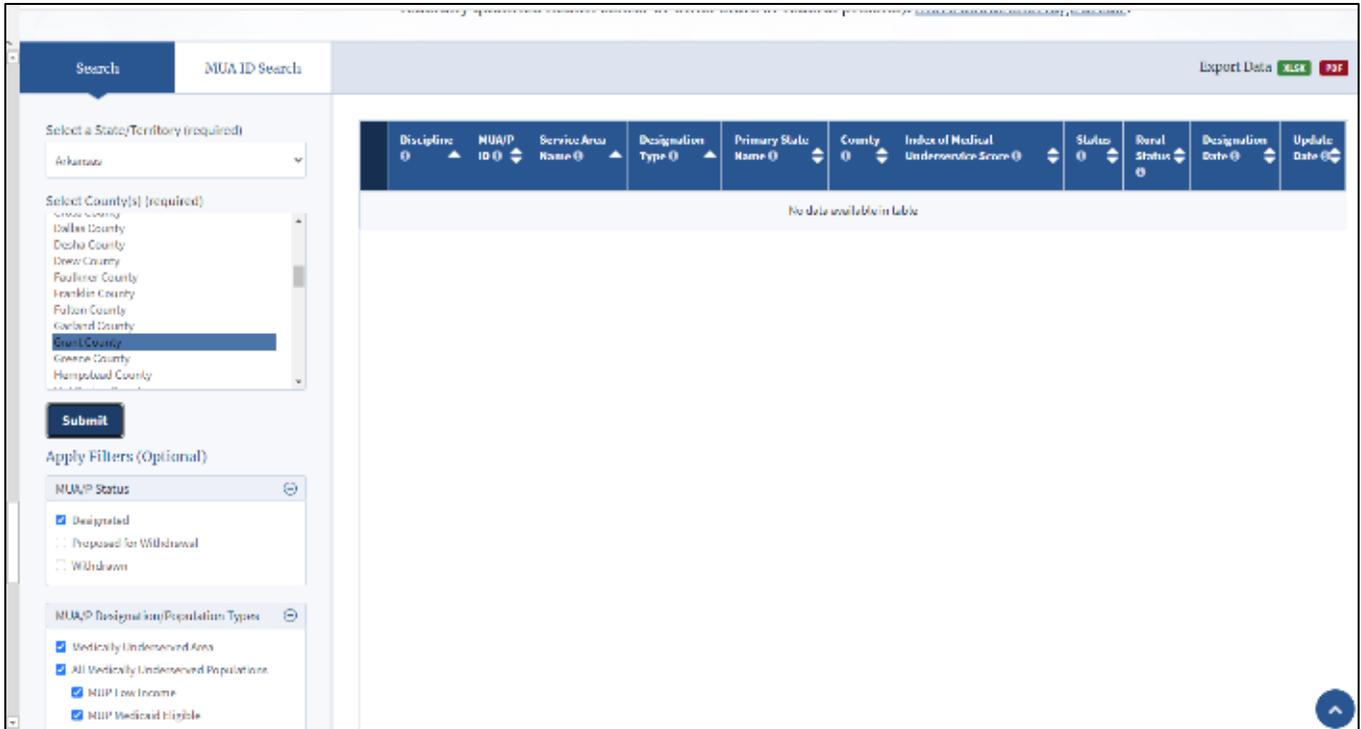
**Total population, number of residents who are rural and urban**

According to the 2019 population estimate total population of Grant County is 18,265. The total population of census tracts 4701, 4702, and 4703 is 12,199 with 5293 housing units (2010 census: Source: [www.USBoundary.com](http://www.USBoundary.com)). 75% of Grant County residents are defined as rural with 25% being an urban cluster.

**Percent of individuals in your proposed service area who are living in poverty**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the poverty rate for Grant County is 14.5%. (Source: <https://www.census.gov/data.html>)

**Medically underserved**



The screenshot above shows “no data available in table” for medically underserved areas in Grant County. (Source: <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/mua-find>)

Sheridan and Grant County are listed in a Dental, Primary Care, and Mental Health Professional Shortage Area. (Source: <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/by-address>)

**Address**  
202 W. Pine St., Sheridan, AR, 72150

**Standardized address**  
202 W Pine St, Sheridan, Arkansas, 72150

**[-] More about this address**

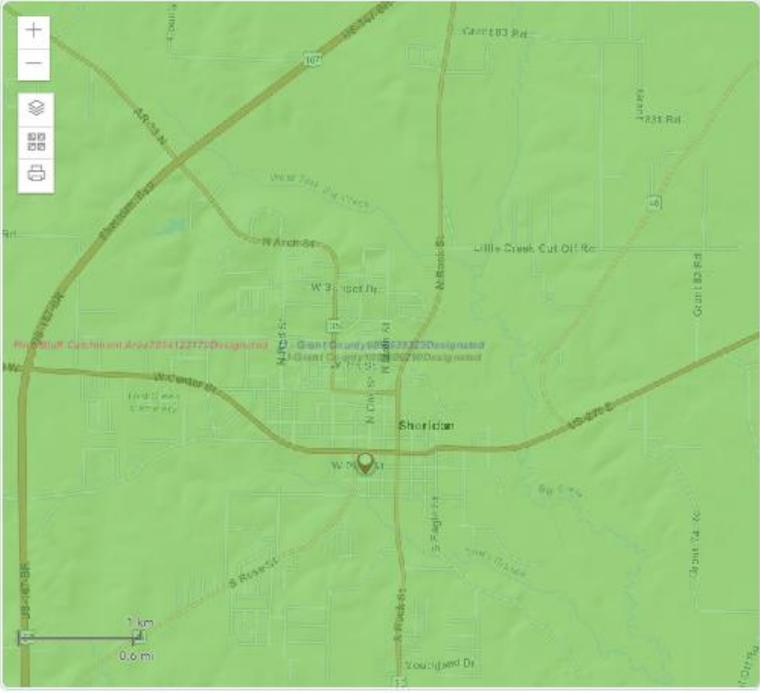
**In a Dental Health HPSA: ✓ Yes**  
HPSA Name: LI - Grant County  
ID: 6056639323  
Designation Type: HPSA Population  
Status: Designated  
Score: 15  
Designation Date: 05/25/2012  
Last Update Date: 08/17/2020

**In a Mental Health HPSA: ✓ Yes**  
HPSA Name: Pine Bluff Catchment Area  
ID: 7054123179  
Designation Type: High Needs Geographic HPSA  
Status: Designated  
Score: 17  
Designation Date: 07/19/1978  
Last Update Date: 10/28/2017

**In a Primary Care HPSA: ✓ Yes**  
HPSA Name: LI-Grant County  
ID: 1054606290  
Designation Type: HPSA Population  
Status: Designated  
Score: 12  
Designation Date: 04/21/2016  
Last Update Date: 06/11/2020

**In a MUA/P: ✗ No**

HPSA Data as of 11/04/2020  
MUA Data as of 11/04/2020



Note: The address you entered is geocoded and then compared against the HPSA and MUA/P data in data.HRSA.gov. Due to geoprocessing limitations, the designation cannot be guaranteed to be 100% accurate and does not constitute an official determination.

## **Description of need (up to 30 points)**

### **Staffing needs:**

The Kick Start Sheridan Board of Directors and Infrastructure Action Team are made up of community leaders and elected officials including an accountant, county judge, city mayor, state representative, engineers, construction contractors, and health and educational professionals. This group has many years of experience in managing contracts, budgets, and grants. Some of these individuals have experience working with broadband companies.

### **Population needs:**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau the population of Grant is 18,265 with 95% being white, and 3% African American. The median household income is \$51,920. The median age in Grant County is 40.4 with 17.2% of the population being 65 or older. However, the majority of the population is 18-64. This leads to many young families in the area that need access to broadband for working from home and for virtual education, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Broadband needs:

As mentioned previously, Grant County is growing and becoming a popular destination for young families interested in living within commuting distance of the Little Rock Metro Area, and Pine Bluff while also enjoying a small town or rural environment. Grant County has much to offer these families with an excellent school system and affordable housing. However, studies show that affordable broadband access is becoming more important to home buyers and does have an effect on property values (Source: <https://economicdevelopment.extension.wisc.edu/files/2019/07/Deller-Whitacre-2019.pdf>; <https://www.forsytheappraisals.com/2015/july/280-fiber-broadband-has-an-impact-on-home-values>) In order for our community to continue to grow broadband internet access needs to be improved and expanded.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the lack of internet access for much our county, particularly the more rural parts. In March, the Sheridan School District was forced to shift from onsite instruction to completely virtual education. Many families did not have access to affordable internet connections, and struggled with virtual education for their children. This led the district to distribute mobile Wi-Fi hotspots on school buses around the county. Not only did families struggle with internet access for their school age children but teachers also struggled with internet access that would allow them to continue to educate and connect with their students. A member of our Action Team told us the story of their family's issues with internet access for his wife who is a teacher at the Sheridan School District:

“We live 9 miles out of town (Sheridan) and the only internet access available to us was satellite and cellular providers. We realized this before the pandemic, but had just tried to make it work with my wife having to drive to campus on the weekend, at night, or stay very late after school to complete lesson plans or submit grades. However when COVID-19 forced the school district to go virtual and we realized that the virtual education was going to last a while, we were forced to start looking for internet options. At the beginning, she was trying to complete her work on her phone. However, we soon realized that between her work requirements and our kids school work this was just not sustainable. We started researching satellite internet plans and soon realized those were very expensive and most came with data caps. While researching cellular Wi-Fi hotspots, data caps were also an issue. We knew data caps would be a problem because of the video uploading and streaming requirements necessary for completing her work, video chatting with her class and for our children completing their school work. Luckily a friend had a cellular plan that allowed her to have unlimited internet access on a cellular Wi-Fi hotspot. She allowed us to purchase a new hot spot device and utilize it when she wasn't using it.”

This story illustrates the struggle for rural families in Grant County to find affordable high-speed internet access.

#### Internet Service Provider relationship needs:

Members of the Kick Start Sheridan Board of Directors and the Infrastructure Team have working relationships with the local provider. The area Windstream Customer Service Representative was also involved with the Kick Start Sheridan strategic planning process and has spoken at Infrastructure team meetings.

#### Financial needs:

The Kick Start Sheridan Board of Directors are volunteers that serve on the board to better our community. The organization operates on a budget of approximately \$15,000 per year. However, the vast majority of those funds are raised by various committees and action teams to fund their projects such as Movies at the Park, the Community Theater Group, or the afterschool program. Other funds generated are grant funds such as the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.

Since the majority of funds generated are for on-going community projects, without the help of this grant, Kick Start Sheridan would not be able to afford a broadband study of this magnitude.

#### Community relationship needs:

Throughout the recent strategic planning process Kick Start engaged the community in a variety of ways that included public meetings, surveys, and through social media. This process was also supported from public officials such as the major, county judge, state representatives, and senators and culminated with the plan unveiling event in which Governor Asa Hutchinson spoke about the importance of community planning and involvement.

Kick Start Sheridan also realized the importance of not only just talking about planning but putting that plan into action. Many projects and activities were quickly started and complete this led to much public “buy-in” and trust from community members.

Kick Sheridan operates a regularly updated Facebook page and sends a quarterly email newsletter to around 400 community members. In addition, the Board of Directors meets monthly to discuss community issues and hear reports from our five action teams with updates about their ongoing projects.

#### **Description of plan (up to 25 points)**

With this proposal, Kick Start Sheridan will:

- Contract with a broadband consulting firm to conduct a broadband feasibility study to include: a survey of available technologies; financial costs and funding requirements; available service speeds and costs; a proposed design approach.
- Bring together internet service providers and local leaders and elected officials to work toward improving broadband availability in Grant County.
- Utilize the existing Kick Start Sheridan Infrastructure Action Team as a broadband task force to help prioritize broadband deployment and help meet the needs of businesses and the general public.

The Timeline for this project will be as follows:

Month 1: Objective – Initiate Grant County Rural Broadband Feasibility Study Project

- Meet with Kick Start Sheridan Infrastructure Action Team to discuss project overview and meet with broadband consultants.
- Assign Action Team member to be the project chair and be the main contact for the consulting firm

Month 2: Objective – Hire Broadband Consultant

- Hire broadband consultant to conduct feasibility study
  - We are currently considering hiring Broadband Development Group, LLC
- Broadband consultant meets with the action team to make final project plans

Month 3: Objective: - Broadband Consultant Begins Work

- Broadband consultant begins work
- Action team meets to discuss plans for releasing the results to the public
- Action team begins to make plans on how to use study to improve broadband access

Month 4 Objective – Broadband Study Update

- Action team meets with the broadband consulting firm for an update on the progress of the study
- Action team makes final plans for a public meeting to release results to the public and community leaders

Month 5 – Complete Study

- Broadband consultant presents final report to the action team
- Action team and elected officials meet with broadband representatives about study results.
- Action team holds public meeting with community leaders to discuss study results and plans to utilize study results.

Month 6 – Final Reports

- Complete and Submit all grant final reports and audits

**Budget**

<<Insert your overall budget using Section B of the SF-424A, the following table, or your own table.>>

<b>Budget Categories</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Personnel	\$0
Fringe Benefits	\$0
Travel	\$0
Equipment	\$0
Supplies	\$300
Contractual	\$69,200
Other	\$5500
<b>Total Request</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>

**Budget Justification (up to 15 points):**

Supplies

- \$300 - Printing costs for final report. Copies will be used by Kick Start representatives and elected officials when discussing future broadband needs

Contractual

- \$69,200 – Contractual costs with a Broadband Consultant Group to conduct the Grant County Broadband Feasibility Study.

Other

- \$5000 – Costs for an audited account of disbursed funds
- \$500 - Cost of a surety bond

**Supporting Documents (up to 10 *bonus* points):**

See attached:

1. Kick Start Sheridan Action Plan
2. Broadband Access Technology Proposal from Broadband Development Group
3. Proposal for Audit Services – Frost Certified Public Accountants
4. Letters of Support
  - a. Lou McAlister – Broadband Development Group
  - b. State Representative Ken Bragg
  - c. County Judge Randy Pruitt
  - d. Sheridan Mayor Joe Wise
  - e. Jerrod Williams – Sheridan School District
  - f. John Allen – Allen Gate and Panel



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# ACTION PLAN



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document, the Kick Start Sheridan Action Plan, is a strategic blueprint for the growth and development of the community of Sheridan, Grant County, and the Sheridan School District in Arkansas over the next five years. The action plan was created as a result of public forums and action teams working together over the past nine months to identify a vision and goals for the community, as well as promising long-term strategic opportunities.

Many people and organizations worked together on this effort, including representatives from the City of Sheridan, Grant County Chamber of Commerce, Sheridan School District, the Grant County Cooperative Extension Service, churches and nonprofits, business owners, local banks, and many other community leaders and citizens. To craft this document, the community worked with the University of Central Arkansas Center for Community and Economic Development (and their Community Development Institute program) and the Breakthrough Solutions program at the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

The interaction between the universities and the community began in August 2018, when a group of community and economic development professionals visited Sheridan to assess the community's current situation and help identify breakthroughs to move the community forward.

As a result of that session, and monthly meetings since that time, priority areas and several breakthroughs have been identified as part of this process. A summary of these key breakthroughs is identified in the next section. The priority areas identified were:

- **Downtown Development**
- **Education and Economic Development**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Recreation and Things to Do**
- **Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship**

Many projects are already underway, and many others are planned and outlined in this document. Community and economic development is a long-term effort that can take many years to bear fruit. The Kick Start Sheridan Action Plan lays the groundwork for those efforts and focuses the enthusiasm and passion that our citizens have exhibited throughout the planning process.

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# COMMUNITY BREAKTHROUGHS

In times of rapid change, successful communities create breakthroughs to move forward toward their desired future. Congratulations to the community leaders and citizens of Sheridan, Grant County, and the Sheridan School District who have developed these breakthroughs and breakthrough solutions:

## **Breakthroughs - Downtown Development**

Revitalize our downtown by:

- Beautifying our downtown and updating our storefronts
- Developing and promoting unique entertainment and dining destinations
- Creating wayfinding signage downtown and throughout the community
- Developing public space downtown for events and a farmers' and craft market
- Connecting the high school arena, downtown, and junior high with sidewalks

## **Breakthroughs – Education and Economic Development**

Strengthen education and the capacity for economic development by:

- Connecting businesses with our schools
- Creating a business retention and expansion program
- Creating a fact sheet for potential employers
- Developing support for a full-time Chamber of Commerce position
- Creating a marketing plan to attract and retain Millennials
- Developing more experiential and service learning opportunities for our youth

## **Breakthroughs – Infrastructure**

Strengthen our infrastructure by:

- Creating a branded wayfinding signage system
- Keeping Google Maps and business listings updated
- Developing the land around the bypass to make it development ready
- Connecting and improving streets, sidewalks, and trails in Sheridan
- Strengthening code enforcement
- Developing high speed infrastructure (Internet) for all citizens

## **Breakthroughs - Recreation and Things to Do**

Develop things to do that will appeal to citizens and visitors by:

- Creating a centralized communication system for disseminating information on events and activities
- Utilizing existing social media to publicize community events
- Developing bike paths and walking trails
- Developing after-hours programs and activities

## **Breakthroughs – Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship**

Strengthen our small business infrastructure by:

- Creating a “shop local” campaign
- Supporting entrepreneurial development
- Surveying businesses on training needs and supporting needs of existing local businesses
- Strategically recruiting businesses for the area along the bypass

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## CORE VALUES

The citizens of Sheridan, Grant County, and the Sheridan School District chose the following core values to guide the Kick Start Sheridan development process:

- Serving as a catalyst that brings people together to make things happen
- Being proactive, with a can-do attitude
- Tackling tough issues honestly, with respect for each other's point of view

These core values are a guide for the development process. As our community, county, and school district continue to come together and work to improve our quality of life, these values will inform all of our decisions because they are the most important to our citizens.

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## VISION STATEMENT

In our vision for the future of Sheridan, Grant County, and the Sheridan School District, the community will be known for its:

- Rich history and traditions that honor the past and embrace the present
- Top-notch school system that prepares our youth for employment in the 21st century economy
- Small town atmosphere and rural living
- Safe environment and a great place to raise a family
- Close proximity to Little Rock, Hot Springs, and Pine Bluff
- Vibrant downtown that offers retail opportunities and activities for residents and visitors
- Strong small business and manufacturing base that provides jobs to local residents
- Natural resources and the economic opportunities they bring
- Strong sense of community with visionary, pro-active leaders committed to creating a healthy, sustainable future for the next generation



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# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thanks to our Kick Start Sheridan Executive Committee and Kick Start Sheridan Action Team co-chairs for their hard work and dedication. These individuals are dedicated to creating a bright future for Sheridan, Grant County, and the Sheridan School District.

## **Co-Directors**

- Brad McGinley, Grant County Cooperative Extension Service
- Carrie Smith, City of Sheridan Clerk-Treasurer

## **Communications Manager**

- Lauren Goins, Sheridan School District Communications Director

## **Secretary**

- Jerrod Williams, Sheridan School District Superintendent

## **Treasurer**

- Lisa E. Grove, Grove & Company CPA

## **Action Team Chairs**

### *Downtown Development*

- Lisa E. Grove, Grove & Company CPA

### *Education and Economic Development*

- Lauren Goins, Sheridan School District Communications Director

### *Infrastructure*

- Deric Wyatt, Arkansas Department of Transportation District Engineer
- Ben Hammond, City of Sheridan Fire Chief

### *Recreation and Things to Do*

- Mayor Joe Wise, City of Sheridan
- Justin Wise, Harmony Health Clinic Executive Director

### *Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship*

- Tina Hurtt, Grant County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director

## **Additional Executive Committee Members**

- Council Member Betty Cook, City of Sheridan
- DJ Wallace, Resurrections Antique Mall Owner
- Jake Easley, Affordable Insurance Solutions Owner
- Jan Wallace, Resurrections Antique Mall Owner
- Judge Randy Pruitt, Grant County
- Tammy Winters, McCoy Tygart Drug Office Manager
- Shelley Short, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce/AIA Vice President Programs and Partnerships
- Andy Mayberry, Mayberry Advertising Owner and former State Representative
- Ken Bragg, Arkansas House of Representatives
- Craig Manatt, Peoples Bank President
- James “Gart” Pitts, Windstream Field Operations Manager

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## ACTION TEAM GOALS

Kick Start Sheridan developed goals based on the following citizen-identified priority areas:

- **Downtown Development**
- **Education and Economic Development**
- **Recreation and Things to Do**
- **Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship**
- **Infrastructure**

Kick Start Sheridan understands that we will need the following to achieve the goals outlined in this section:



**Funding**



**Public Policy**



**Partnerships**



**Awareness**

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## DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Chairperson: Lisa E. Grove, [lisa@grovecompanycpas.com](mailto:lisa@grovecompanycpas.com)

*What would it look like if Sheridan/Grant County/Sheridan School District became known for its vibrant, thriving downtown because of its beauty, and opportunities for shopping, dining, entertainment, and cultural activities?*

### **1. Beautify downtown Sheridan by hosting clean-up days, installing public art and planters, and updating storefronts and building interiors.**

#### Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: Garden Club, downtown businesses, City of Sheridan, Joann Gartman (planters), William Guffy (clean up), Infrastructure Action Team

- Organize a county-wide clean-up day.
- Work with Master Gardeners to better utilize the existing planters downtown.
- Recruit bankers, realtors, and downtown merchants to support and/or sponsor other beautification projects.

### Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: City of Sheridan, downtown businesses, Grant County Chamber of Commerce, Infrastructure Action Team

- Enforce codes that are in place and review codes to see what needs to be updated.
- Establish a plan for maintaining beautification projects.
- Identify boundaries for downtown.
- Design and install wayfinding signage downtown and throughout the county to draw visitors downtown and to points of interest.

## **2. Develop and promote unique entertainment and dining destinations that appeal to families and young people, support arts and cultural activities, and draw residents and visitors downtown.**

### Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: Recreation and Things to Do Action Team, Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship Action Team, Grant County Chamber of Commerce, downtown businesses

- Enhance marketing efforts for current downtown events (i.e., Christmas on the Square).
- Research ideas for promoting downtown (e.g., Roger Brooks videos).

### Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Georginia Daniel, UA Cooperative Extension, local government (mayor and county judges), Recreation and Things to Do Action Team, Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship Action Team, Chamber of Commerce, downtown businesses

- Establish a farmers' and craft market downtown, which would include:
  - Training for growers.
  - Extended hours: 4-7 p.m.
  - Arts, crafts, food, music, etc.
- Create a public space for more events/festivals downtown.
- Develop a connected corridor with new sidewalks between the new high school arena, downtown, and junior high (4-6 block area).

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## RECREATION & THINGS TO DO

Chairpersons: Mayor Joe Wise & Justin Wise, [justinwiseonline@gmail.com](mailto:justinwiseonline@gmail.com)

*What would it look like if Sheridan/Grant County/Sheridan School District became known for its recreation and things to do for people of all ages that come from all over the nation?*

### **1. Create a centralized communication system for disseminating information on events and activities.**

#### Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: Downtown Development Action Team, City of Sheridan, Sheridan Headlight, Grant County Chamber of Commerce

- Utilize existing social media to publicize community events.
  - East End Community Events/Info (existing Facebook group)
- Establish new Sheridan/Grant County/Sheridan School District Instagram, Facebook and YouTube accounts and encourage the use of hashtags.
- Update the City of Sheridan website to include an online calendar of events.
- Include calendar of events in the local newspaper.
- Establish and utilize a physical bulletin board(s) in the community for posting fliers and calendar of events.
- Post fliers and calendar of events at the Chamber of Commerce office.

## **2. Create biking and walking trails citizens and visitors can enjoy.**

### Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: City of Sheridan and local organizations

- Installation of bike route signage and asphalt painting along roads.

### Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: City of Sheridan and local organizations

- Development of bike paths.
- Development of walking trails.

## **3. Develop after-hours programs and activities.**

### Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: Sheridan School District, downtown businesses, Downtown Development Action Team, Grant County Chamber of Commerce

- Create a Community Theater Group to conduct plays throughout the year.
- Develop a Pets Committee that will focus on animal adoption and altering clinics.
- Host after-hours programming like Movies at the Park.

### Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Sheridan School District, downtown businesses, Downtown Development Action Team, Grant County Chamber of Commerce

- Establish a Downtown Business District:
  - Later and more consistent business hours.
  - Merchants need to share their announcements with the community to draw traffic.
  - Take advantage of Small Business Saturday.
  - Expand Christmas on the Square and improve marketing efforts for the event.



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## EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chairperson: Lauren Goins, [laurengoins@sheridanschools.org](mailto:laurengoins@sheridanschools.org)

*What would it look like if Sheridan/Grant County/Sheridan School District became known for its motivated, skilled workforce that supported its strong business and economic development initiatives?*

### **1. Develop a work-ready workforce by connecting businesses with our school and creating programs that will assist unemployed and underemployed citizens.**

#### Short-term projects and ongoing objectives

Stakeholders: ACT Work Ready Communities Initiative, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, Sheridan School District, local businesses, local nonprofits

- Continue to work on making Grant County a Work Ready Community.
- Promote and publicize Career Technical Education (CTE) and Workforce Ready Community (WRC) initiative.
- Collaborate with Adult Education and Workforce Services to bring more services to our community.
- Host career fair to include resume assistance and the National Career Readiness Certification.
- Leverage the Sheridan Schools career coach for building relationships with employers.

## **2. Develop a local economy that has a diverse mix of businesses and industries.**

### Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Grant County Chamber of Commerce, Kick Start Sheridan Executive Committee, Grant County Industrial Development Corporation

- Develop a partnership with the local economic/industrial alliance.
- Develop a fact sheet for potential employers to get them interested in opening a business in the community.
- Create a list of businesses that our local citizens would like to see in town.
- Create a list of potential employers and begin meeting with them.

## **3. Create a business retention and expansion initiative.**

### Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Grant County Chamber of Commerce, Kick Start Sheridan Executive Committee

- Build the capacity of the chamber:
  - Research what other chambers of commerce are doing to generate revenue, engage the business community to identify the greatest opportunities and challenges, and develop funding support for a full-time chamber staff person who can help sustain Kick Start Sheridan initiatives.
- Partner with the chamber to promote current businesses.
- Partner with the chamber to research the challenges of our current businesses.

## **4. Create a marketing plan that attracts millennials to the community.**

### Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Sheridan School District, local businesses, developers, local coffee shops

- Establish who will manage the marketing plan.
- Target recent graduates of Sheridan High School and those who have left to return to Sheridan.
- Connect with the class presidents of recent graduating classes.
- Gather insight from recent graduates about what would make them come back to the community.
- Establish high school internship program to connect students with local industry.
- Host a focus group with Millennials currently living or working in the community.

## **5. Develop more experiential and service learning opportunities for our youth.**

### Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Local 4-H, The Well, daycare providers, faith-based organizations, Recreation and Things to Do Action Team

- Support access to high-quality early childcare and education opportunities.
- Bring a tutoring business to the community.
- Support The Well in East End.
- Collaborate with the Recreation and Things to Do Action Team to bring a Boys and Girls Club (or similar organization) to Sheridan.

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# SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Chairperson: Tina Hurtt, thurtt79@gmail.com

*What would it look like if Sheridan/Grant County/Sheridan School District became known as a tremendous place to start or operate a business because of its supportive business climate, services, and 21st century infrastructure?*

## **1. Strategically recruit businesses for the area along the bypass.**

### Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Hotel investors, local businesses, downtown businesses, Grant County Chamber of Commerce, Grant County Industrial Development Corporation

- Focus on key businesses such as hotels, convenience stores, and chain establishments.
- Ensure that businesses on the bypass are connected to and partnered with downtown businesses.
- Gather and utilize statistics to justify the need for certain businesses (such as a hotel).
- Partner with the local economic/industrial alliance.

## **2. Support entrepreneurial development by simplifying the process of starting a business, providing mentors, and creating an entrepreneurship program. Support needs of existing local businesses.**

### Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: Local business owners, students, local institutions of higher learning, Small Business Administration

- Survey businesses on training needs.
- Research what other cities are doing to assist in the creation of small businesses (entrepreneurship programs, training, etc.).
- Create an information packet for potential small business owners and entrepreneurs. It will be in online and paper format (available at the Chamber and city).
- Utilize local experts to provide training and mentoring, including the U.S. Small Business Administration in Little Rock, UALR, and Henderson.

## **3. Create a “shop local” campaign.**

### Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: Grant County Chamber of Commerce, City of Sheridan, Recreation and Things to Do Action Team, Downtown Development Action Team, Sheridan Headlight

- Create a marketing plan: “Shop Local” signs and banners, social media efforts, pamphlets, and engage businesses in the plan.
- Create and place “Shop Local” window/door signs in businesses throughout town.
- Create “shop local” events in which all local businesses may participate and local goods and services can be promoted (i.e, monthly shop local days).

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# INFRASTRUCTURE

Chairpersons: Deric Wyatt and Ben Hammond, [deric.wyatt@ardot.gov](mailto:deric.wyatt@ardot.gov)

*What would it look like if Sheridan/Grant County/Sheridan School District became known for its broadband and infrastructure that provides a foundation for economic development in the 21st century economy?*

## **1. Create a branded wayfinding signage system and keep Sheridan’s Google Maps and business listings updated.**

### Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: Grant County Chamber of Commerce, students, local businesses, City of Sheridan, Downtown Development Action Team

- Update Google business listings
- Partner with the Grant County Chamber of Commerce to lead this project.
- Provide training for local businesses.
- Partner with high school students to assist with this project.

### Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Grant County Chamber of Commerce, students, local businesses, City of Sheridan, Downtown Development Action Team

- Update Google Maps listings (to improve navigation)
- Design and install wayfinding signage downtown and throughout the county.

## **2. Develop the land around the bypass to make it development ready.**

### Long-term objectives:

Stakeholders: City of Sheridan (City Engineer), City of Sheridan Fire Department, State Representative Ken Bragg

- Develop 5, 10, and 20-year plans.
- Contact the Delta Regional Authority and Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District (SEAEDD) to see if funding is available for Long Range Plan Development.
- Expand water and sewer system along Hwy 167 Bypass for future development.
- Review state laws pertaining to rural water associations boundaries within city limits.
- Address fire protection (establish minimum standards for water systems to provide fire protection).
- Determine funding sources for infrastructure (e.g., tax or bond initiative).

## **3. Connect and improve streets, sidewalks, and trails in Sheridan.**

### Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: City of Sheridan, Sheridan School District, Recreation and Things to Do Action Team

- Develop a map with proposed sidewalks connecting all schools and downtown.
- Research grants and other funding sources for sidewalks.
- Develop a plan for future trails connecting downtown, rec center, ball fields, and new library.

**4. Keep Sheridan beautiful and eco-friendly by strengthening code enforcement, hosting clean-up days, and creating recycling initiatives.**

Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: City of Sheridan, Downtown Development Action Team, County Judge

- Review existing city codes and develop a list of needed building/property codes.
- Host waste disposal events (research available funds for waste disposal fees).

Long-term objectives:

Stakeholders: City of Sheridan, Downtown Development Action Team, County Judge

- Hire part-time code enforcement officer.
- Address abandoned structures, junkyards, and safety issues.
- Assess need for recycling programs.
- Research potential for a “Class 4” county landfill.

**5. Make Sheridan competitive in the 21st-century economy by providing high-speed internet access to all citizens.**

Short-term and ongoing objectives

Stakeholders: Windstream, other broadband service providers

- Regularly communicate with local providers to discuss broadband needs.

Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Windstream, other broadband service providers

- Improve speeds of existing Internet service and expand broadband coverage.



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## KICK START SHERIDAN FACILITATORS

The Community Development Institute Central (CDI), established in 1987 at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) in Conway, trains community and economic development professionals in Arkansas and surrounding states. The complete CDI experience is a three-year training program, with one week of training per year. Participants are exposed to a comprehensive, applied approach to the field of community and economic development. CDI is relevant for both new and seasoned professionals because it focuses on best practices and current trends. CDI is coordinated by the Center for Community and Economic Development team at UCA, as follows: Assistant Vice President, Community and Workforce Development Amy Whitehead, Managing Director Shelby Fiegel and Project Coordinator Moriah Bruner.

The Community Development Kick Start program was created to provide a unique opportunity for CDI graduates to apply their knowledge and skills to a real-life situation and to kick start a community and economic development process in one community.

Community Development Kick Start uses the Breakthrough Solutions Model from the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, with Dr. Mark Peterson, professor of Community and Economic Development, serving as facilitator and partner for this initiative. The Breakthrough Solutions Program is a partnership initiative with the purpose of equipping communities and regions in Arkansas to be vibrant, sustainable, and resilient in this 21st century economy.

Communities in Arkansas were invited to apply for this unique opportunity, and Sheridan was selected. Once Sheridan was selected as the Kick Start community, leaders began collaborating with CDI and U of A Cooperative Extension Service in July of 2018.

To learn more about CDI visit [www.uca.edu/cdi](http://www.uca.edu/cdi).

To learn more about Breakthrough Solutions, visit [www.uaex.edu/business-communities/strategic-planning/breakthrough-solutions.aspx](http://www.uaex.edu/business-communities/strategic-planning/breakthrough-solutions.aspx).



# KICK START SHERIDAN

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[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/KICKSTARTSHERIDAN](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/KICKSTARTSHERIDAN)



## **BROADBAND ACCESS TECHNOLOGY PROPOSAL FOR GRANT COUNTY CENSUS TRACTS 4701 4702, 4703**

Broadband Development Group, LLC is pleased to propose the following to study the technologies that are in-place, or available, for delivering broadband Internet access to Census Tracts 4701, 4702, 4703 in unincorporated Grant County, Arkansas.

The proposal will include an overview of the requirements and available technologies and a final report with conclusions and recommendations.

### **Summary of activity**

Demographic Summary to include:

- Number of residents, including age statistics
- Number of households
- Number of housing units
- Income statistics
- Electronic devices per household (where available)
- Additional statistics as appropriate

### **Survey of available broadband offerings from any source**

- Available technologies - including DSL, fiber optics, cellular, satellite, fixed wireless, and CATV
- Available service levels and prices
- Sample speed tests and coverage maps
- Sample polling of residents for user input

### **Summary of costs/feasibility of last-mile technologies**

- Fiber-to-the-home
- Fixed wireless
- Satellite
- Etc.

### **High-level financial model**

- Costs
- Revenues
- Sustainability

### **Proposed network approach**

- High-level design in support of conclusions regarding available technologies

### **High-level financial model**

- Funding requirements for a deployment project

We will include two meetings with interested parties to gather input, suggestions, and needs to be included as part of the data gathering phase.

Milestone 1 will be to complete the above items as data gathering and designing.

Milestone 2 will be to develop conclusions and write the final report.

We will present a final report to the community and interested parties, as directed by community leaders.

### **Project pricing**

- BDG price is \$13 /housing unit

### **Terms**

- 50% upon commencement of the project
- 50% upon delivery of the final report

Respectfully submitted by

Louis F. McAlister  
CEO  
Broadband Development Group, LLC



Brad McGinley-CEA Staff Chair  
U of A-Division of Agriculture  
Sheridan, Arkansas

RE: Proposal for audit services

Brad,

We are pleased to present this proposal to meet the audit requirements for the Rural Broadband Trust Fund Grant. It would be our privilege and honor to provide services to your Organization and we are most appreciative of the opportunity you have afforded us.

We believe in providing the highest quality services under the standards of our profession. We have developed Assurance Services Policies and Procedures Manual that sets forth stringent quality control standards for our Firm.

Based on our understanding of the nature and scope of your Organization, we have estimated a fee to not exceed \$5,000 for each grant. This will be based on the amount of expenditures each grantee has for their corresponding grant. You will also be billed for travel and other out-of-pocket such as report production, word processing, postage, etc.

Certain conditions can affect the time incurred in completing this engagement. Among these are the general condition of your records as well as the amount of assistance received from your Accountant in the accumulation of data, and/or analysis requested in conjunction with our work. The fee indication above is based on the assumption that you will provide assistance as requested in order to ensure the efficiency of our work. In addition it is based upon no significant changes in operations and/or new accounting pronouncements that would involve additional time by our firm.

We would expect to begin our fieldwork on a mutually agreed upon date and will meet any date requirements established by the grant award letter.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this proposal covering the auditing services offered by Frost, PLLC. We welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you have regarding our services. We are also happy to provide any additional information you may need. Please feel free to contact me at (479) 695-4300 or at [svasgaard@frostpllc.com](mailto:svasgaard@frostpllc.com).

Sincerely,

*Sarahbeth Vasgaard*

425 West Capitol Avenue, Suite 3300 | Little Rock, Arkansas 72201 | 501.376.9241 | [frostpllc.com](http://frostpllc.com)  
4375 N. Vantage Drive, Suite 403 | Fayetteville, Arkansas 72703 | 479.695.4300  
5510 Six Forks, Rd, Suite 103 | Raleigh, North Carolina 27609 | 919.782.8410  
680 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street | Yuma, Arizona 85364 | 928.782.9831  
8408 E. Shea Blvd, Suite 100 | Scottsdale, Arizona 85260 | 602.765.3089



October 12, 2020

TO: Mr. Brad McGinley  
Kickstart Sheridan  
Sheridan, AR 72150

Dear Mr. McGinley:

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of Broadband Development Group, LLC for Kickstart Sheridan's proposed broadband due diligence study that would be supported through the state-funded Rural Broadband I.D. Expenses Trust Fund Grant.

My organization will provide a report as described in the grant application with the goal of potentially providing and/or improving broadband Internet access coverage. BDG's goal is to make affordable broadband Internet access service that meets, or exceeds, FCC minimum requirements widely-available in the proposed service area.

I look forward to helping with this broadband initiative.

Sincerely,

Louis McAlister

CEO & Co-founder  
Broadband Development Group, LLC



STATE OF ARKANSAS

# House of Representatives

## REPRESENTATIVE

Ken Bragg

ASSISTANT SPEAKER PRO TEM

63 Pinecrest Circle  
Sheridan, Arkansas 72150-9704

870-917-9205 Cell  
kenwbragg@gmail.com

## DISTRICT 15

### Counties:

Part Grant  
Part Hot Spring  
Part Jefferson

## COMMITTEES:

Revenue and Taxation  
Sales, Use, Miscellaneous Taxes and  
Exemptions Subcommittee

Agriculture, Forestry and Economic  
Development  
Chairperson,  
Agriculture, Forestry and Natural  
Resources Subcommittee

Joint Committee on Energy

Legislative Council

October 20, 2020

UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation  
c/o: Rural Broadband ID Application  
Attn: Roy Kitchen  
4301 W. Markham St. Slot 519  
Little Rock, AR 72205

Dear Mr. Kitchen

I would like to recommend the granting of the Rural Broadband ID grant to the Kickstart organization in Grant County. I serve on the Infrastructure Committee for Kickstart and broadband access has been our top priority. I hosted a meeting a few years ago with our major provider of internet service and local businesses to discuss the problems we were having. Bandwidth was low, service was intermittent, and many areas of the county had no service. Our local school systems have had to provide specific wi-fi locations in various points in the county to enable students to access online requirements. There are many instances where local businesses have had difficulty in transmitting critical data. This grant will enable Grant County to assess the needs and status of internet accessibility and develop a plan that will enhance the availability for internet access.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ken Bragg".

Ken Bragg  
State Representative  
District 15



Grant County Courthouse  
Sheridan, AR 72150

**RANDY PRUITT**  
*Grant County Judge*

(870) 942-2551

October 14, 2020

TO: Mr. Brad McGinley  
Kickstart Sheridan  
Sheridan, AR 72150

Dear Mr. McGinley:

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of Grant County for Kickstart Sheridan's proposed broadband due diligence study that would be supported through the state-funded Rural Broadband I.D. Expenses Trust Fund Grant.

Broadband coverage in Grant County is not widely available throughout the county. The further distance from the City of Sheridan that you go the more unavailable the connection becomes. I am supporting Kickstart Sheridan and their broadband initiative to provide better internet connectivity for all the citizens in Grant County.

Thank you,

Randy Pruitt  
Grant County Judge

# City of Sheridan

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
BOX 44

*Sheridan, Arkansas 72150*

Joe Wise, Jr., Mayor

Carrie Smith, City Clerk-Treasurer

October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Brad McGinley  
Cooperative Extension Service  
202 West Pine Street  
Sheridan, AR 72150

RE: Letter of Support, "RURAL BROADBAND I.D. EXPENSE TRUST FUND GRANT"

Dear Mr. McGinley,

Please use this letter to show that the City of Sheridan is strongly in support of extending broadband services to our rural areas.

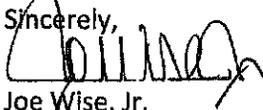
As you are aware, KICKSTART SHERIDAN has identified through our "Infrastructure Committee" the importance of our community being able to support this need throughout Grant County, specifically, the rural areas.

Currently, within the city limits of Sheridan, we have acceptable service but our rural areas are lacking.

It is the "Infrastructure Committee's" desire to know that all citizens of Grant County have adequate Broadband service.

Your efforts in making this happen are very much appreciated.

Sincerely,



Joe Wise, Jr.

Mayor

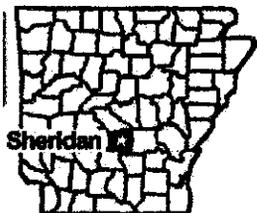
**JOE WISE, JR.**

*Mayor*

*City of Sheridan*

Box 44

Sheridan, Arkansas 72150





# SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

## DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

400 NORTH ROCK STREET | SHERIDAN, AR 72150 | 870.942.3135 | WWW.SHERIDANSCHOOLS.ORG

October 14, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Sheridan School District covers an area of 620 square miles within the counties of Grant and Saline. Geographically, we are the fifth largest district in Arkansas, and our district is growing. We are also a “rural” community. We have two elementary schools, two intermediate schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Sheridan School District now offers our students options for learning that include virtual learning. With this option, students need reliable internet connection that has sufficient capacity to complete their work on-line.

A broadband feasibility study is needed in our area. We support those in our community who are applying for a grant from UAMS to perform this study. Hopefully, the outcome of this study will result in the expansion of broadband accessibility in our area.

It is our desire to provide the best education possible to all our students. That goal would be more attainable if this study resulted in better service for our patrons.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jerrod Williams  
Superintendent

JKW:ggj

# Allen Gate and Panel, Inc

29 Grant 441

Prattsville, AR 72129

11/2/2020

Dear Kick Start Sheridan Board,

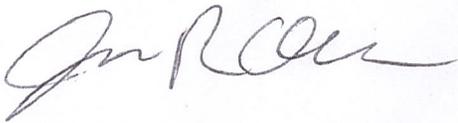
I am pleased to write this letter in support of Kick Start Sheridan's Application for the UAMS Rural Broadband Grant Program. I manage Allen Gate and Panel based in Prattsville, Arkansas. We are a metal goods manufacture and wholesaler that specializes in livestock equipment.

Having managed a rural based business for several years, I know the challenges facing rural business with limited broadband access. Increased internet access and speeds could help rural businesses become more efficient, increase productivity, and improve digital marketing opportunities. In order for Grant County businesses to continue to become more national competitive, we must continue to improve internet access and speeds.

As more and more of our business revolves around internet communication, I find myself needing better internet speeds. Credit card processing, download speeds and internet browsing are critical. Most recently virtual meetings are extremely important. We have really struggled with virtual meetings from out location.

Again, I fully support Kick Start Sheridan's application for this Grant Program and look forward to working with the Infrastructure Action Team to improve broadband access for rural businesses and citizens.

Sincerely,



John R Allen

Allen Gate and Panel, Inc