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## Broadband Project Update

### Engineering and Feasibility Study

The Engineering and Feasibility Study is underway and should be completed in about a week. David Shipley, from [South Park Telephone](#) (SPT), expects to have a report to us around April 24th. At that time, we will learn the total cost of the project and what we can expect for services and monthly rates. We haven't decided on a format for the meeting yet - possibly Zoom or the SPT bridge line, both of which would allow for dialogue so David can answer our questions. Once we have information from the report, the next step will be to work on obtaining commitments - meaning who's in and who's out.

### January 2020 Grant Awards

I wanted to share with you how the January 2020 broadband grant cycle played out. ([Remember we are submitting for the July 2020 grant cycle.](#)).

The [Broadband Deployment Board](#) met on March 31st to review grants submitted for the January 2020 cycle. Since it was a virtual meeting, I was able to listen online to their decision-making when awarding grants.

- There were 21 grants submitted, some on their 2rd or 3rd submission.
- Four were deemed to not have met the minimum requirements.
- One was eliminated for being a few hours late (deadline is strictly adhered to)
- ~\$25 million was the total requested .
- After the five eliminations, \$18,688,979 was the amount requested from the sixteen remaining grants.
- \$7,274,314 was the amount available distribute.
- Since there wasn't enough money to fund the sixteen grants that qualified, the Board narrowed down the grants by looking at the following:
  - **Priority** - The grant contained the most people who had <10 Mbps
  - **Cost Per Address** - If cost per address is high, then fewer households are served.
  - **Total Cost of Grant** - If the total amount requested is high, then fewer grants can be awarded.
  - **Percent match** - 25-30% match wasn't good enough. They looked at 40-50% match grants
  - **Geography** - They want to make sure grants are being disbursed in all areas of the state, as much as possible.
- None of these factors are set in stone. For example, they awarded one high-cost grant because they knew the terrain was rugged and it simply will cost more to help that area.
- Five grants were ultimately awarded. [Click here to see the grants awarded for January 2020.](#)

We will have tough competition in July and we have to prepare ourselves for the fact that we may not be awarded in July 2020 and will have to try again in January 2021.

### What We Can Do To Help our Chances

Based on what I learned from the January 2020 grant cycle, there are a couple of things

we can do that are important to help our grant:

1. We need to obtain **as many commitments as possible** before July 15th to improve our match percentage. We'll start working on that after we get the Engineering Study Report.
2. The Board did consider letters of support from residents, HOAs, businesses and local governments such as county commissioners, cities and any other stakeholders. **Our residents need to send letters of support.**

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## Call to Action

One thing we can work on now while we're waiting for the Report from South Park Telephone is **letters of support**. I'm asking everyone to send a letter of support to by e-mail to [David Shipley](mailto:dshipley@usch.com) at dshipley@usch.com and copy me, bevlong2555@gmail.com. This **WILL** make a difference and help our grant. Some guidelines for your letters:

- Address your letter as follows:  
Colorado Broadband Deployment Board  
1560 Broadway, Suite 1550  
Denver, CO 80202
- Make is personal.
  - Who is your internet provider now?
  - What problems are you experiencing? How is it impacting you?
  - What are your speeds?
  - What would you like to do that you can't (for example - streaming, gaming, home security cameras, manage large file downloads, teleconferencing, cellphone service boosting, etc.)?
  - Does poor internet impact your healthcare/telemedicine, your child's education, work, teleconferencing, etc?
  - How would better internet change your lifestyle?
- If you have a business, please write a letter from your business. Letters from businesses and municipalities have a lot of weight.
- Talking about property value is not the message they want to hear.
- If you want ideas, you can look at some of the [grant applications](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dora-broadband-fund/apps-received), <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dora-broadband-fund/apps-received>, that have been submitted. For example, the January 2020 Burland Grant has 70 letters.

Thank you for your continued support!

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## Broadband Survey

I know you are tired of this reminder, but if you haven't already, please fill out our brief Broadband Survey. This applies to all residents and helps us know who is interested and who is not, along with a little bit about your current service. [Click here to take the survey.](#)

## Where To Go For More Information

For more Information visit our webpage, [www.285broadband.com](http://www.285broadband.com). For the most current updates join our private [Facebook Discussion Group](#).

As always, never hesitate to call or e-mail me with questions.

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