

Southern Tier Network, Inc.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

PROJECT: Broadband Pilot

SOUTHERN TIER NETWORK
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Corning, NY 14830
Phone: (607) 962-5092

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
Southern Tier Network Broadband Pilot

RFP ISSUE DATE: August 21, 2017
RFP SUBMISSION DEADLINE: September 28, 2017 2:00PM EST

Questions should be directed in writing prior to September 14, 2017 to:

RFP Contact Name: Andy Lukasiewicz
Contact Address: ECC Technologies, Inc.
2136 Five Mile Line Rd.
Penfield, New York 14526
Telephone Number: (585) 643-2228

Email Address: andy@ecctec.com

Electronic RFP Submissions and copy of all correspondence should be sent to:

Contact Name: Steve Manning, CEO
Southern Tier Network
Contact Address: 8 Denison Parkway E., Suite 310
Corning, New York, 14830
Telephone Number: (607) 962-5092

Email Address: smanning@southerntiernetwork.org

1. INTRODUCTION

The Southern Tier Network (STN) is a not-for-profit, open access optical fiber network that was created through a partnership of Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board, Corning Incorporated, and Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties. Established in January of 2011, the original 235-mile fiber ring designed to run through Schuyler, Chemung and Steuben Counties has expanded to over 300 miles of fiber and has added an approximately 210 miles in Yates County, Broome, Tioga, Allegany & Tompkins counties which will increase STN's fiber to over 500 route miles.

The network was built to support the needs of public safety, improve broadband access in the rural areas, increase competition and the level of telecommunications services throughout the region, and create a globally competitive advantage for job creation in the Southern Tier Central region.

A detailed map of the region and locations of the fiber network appears as Attachment A.

2. PROJECT SCOPE

The Southern Tier Network is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify potential partnerships with qualified Broadband providers and other interested entities to support the development of high-speed broadband services throughout the region. Although the initial pilot project is anticipated to be in the regions of Reading Center, County Route (CR) 16 and CR17 in Schuyler County, this RFP is being released with the intent of generating interest from various entities wishing to create a region wide solution to use the STN fiber backbone to develop and implement new broadband services or enhance existing services in the unserved and underserved areas. For this pilot, it is anticipated that the potential number of customers is approximately 432 residential and business locations. There are approximately 164 residents and businesses along CR16 and CR17 in Schuyler County, NY and approximately 268 residents and businesses in the Preemption Road and Reading Center areas of Schuyler County, NY. STN is seeking network solutions and business models that are innovative and that prepare the region for future technological innovations while serving today's needs for higher speeds, more complete coverage, and a wider range of choices for consumers.

The STN network provides increased dark fiber capacity in the region, to be utilized by an array of current and future partners. This RFP however, is focused specifically on last-mile partners. It is anticipated that both fiber-based and wireless-based solutions will be presented in the RFP responses and both will be considered.

The goals of this initiative are:

1. Establish partnerships between the STN and interested providers for the betterment of the communities involved and for quality of life enhancements.
2. Facilitate the development of cost effective broadband into the CR16, CR17 and Reading Center areas of Schuyler County, addressing unserved and underserved residents.
3. Enable the deployment of state-of-the-art technologies, services, and applications that are often found in more developed urban areas but may not be currently available within the region.
4. Create a competitive advantage for the region with respect to economic development, job creation, and growth opportunities.
5. Provide an open-access architecture that enables the deployment of last-mile fiber and wireless technologies.
6. Provide a collaborative foundation to serve the region for the foreseeable future.

To reach these goals, STN will provide Vendor(s) with access to a negotiated number of strands of existing optical fibers owned or controlled by STN at negotiated rates. The network fiber optic cable is single mode cabling as manufactured by Corning Incorporated with installed capacities ranging from 72 to 144 fiber strands. Roughly 85% of the network is aerial while 15% is underground. The STN Network has been constructed using Corning Cable Systems ALTOS Loose Tube 28e "Full-Spectrum" Single mode optical fiber cable or equivalent adhering to the ITU G.652.D specifications.

- SMF wavelength (nm): 1310/1383/1550
- Maximum Attenuation (dB/km): <=0.4/0.4/0.3
- "Full-Spectrum" G.652.D
- Gel-Free

STN fiber will allow for interconnection to fiber that may be owned by others in the region. Interconnections will be made available at strategically located Points of Presence (POPs) or co-location points. POPs and co-locations can be strategically located in towns, villages, and other desirable locations within each community. Access can be provided at convenient locations along the entire fiber route to accommodate rural access using splice and maintenance loops installed at approximately 1,500-foot intervals across the network. Additional access points may be made available.

Additionally, STN will consider responses that facilitate the development and installation of wireless Wi-Fi Broadband network to serve the unserved and underserved areas in this region. If this option is considered, STN will consider partnerships with 1) qualified wireless providers seeking to build and operate a wireless Broadband Network, 2) qualified wireless providers who will consider operating a wireless network built by STN as well as any potential combination of options that may exist. Responders are encouraged to consider and propose creative solutions for both wireless and or FTTH options.

Responders are encouraged to submit responses which identify roles and responsibilities of both the provider as well as STN. STN envisions creative approaches that could consider but are not necessarily limited to providing hardware, operations support, administrative support, and any combination of ownership and operations of all of the above with respect to closing the gaps on rural broadband in the STN region and in particular the Pilot area. In summary STN is anticipating responders to submit viable solutions which can but do not require shared responsibilities between STN and the responder.

3. OTHER ASSETS/FACILITIES/SERVICES TO BE MADE AVAILABLE BY SOUTHERN TIER NETWORK

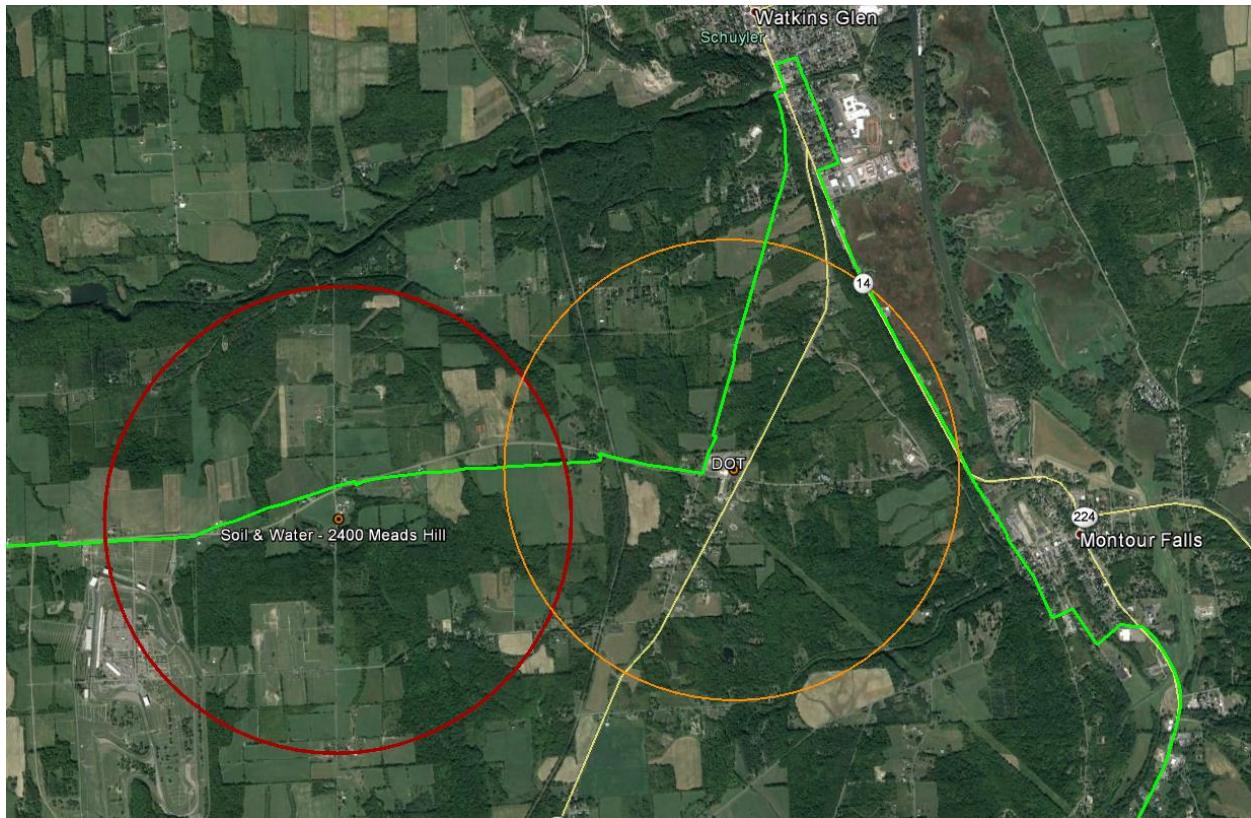
In addition to the fiber optic capacity and colocation space within the deployed fiber network that will be provided to Vendor(s) by STN, it is anticipated that assets, services, and infrastructure owned by STN may be required. These include but are not limited to conduit, rack space and other assets.

4. GRANTS AND OTHER RESOURCES

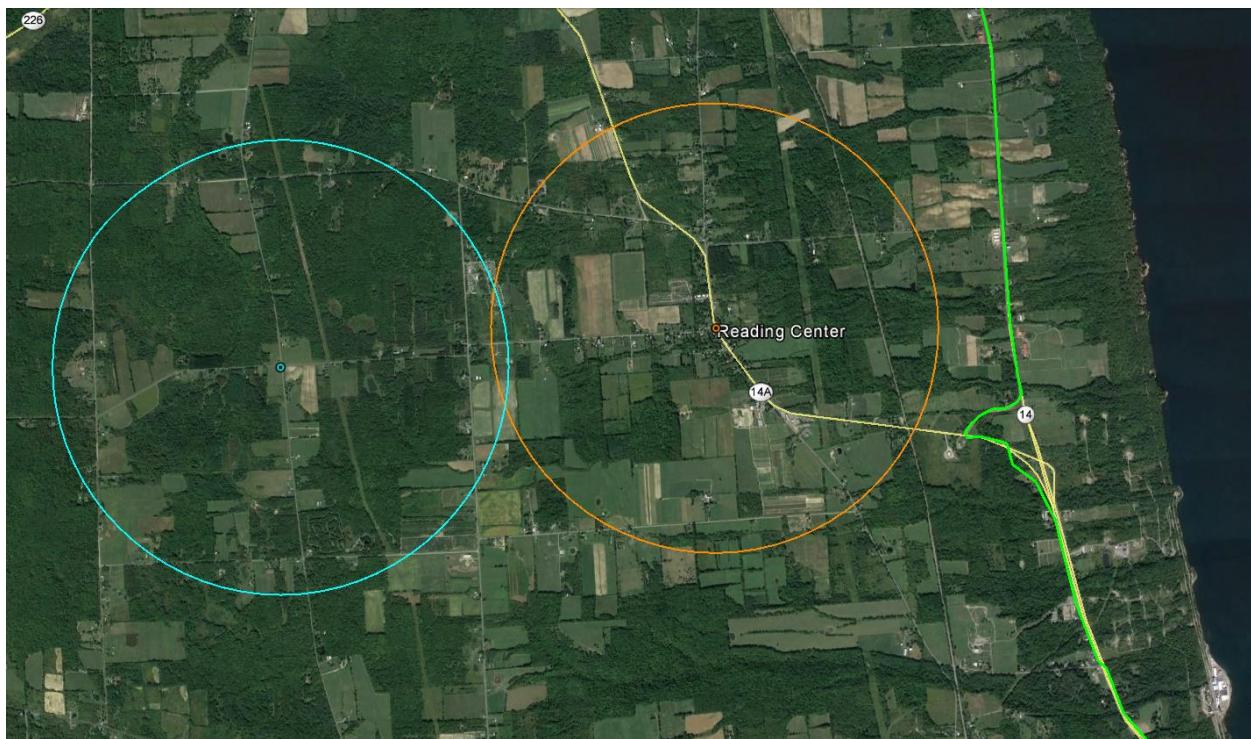
Identifying and securing grants that can be directed to broadband expansion and development in this region will be of interest to STN. STN may be able to provide Vendor(s) with assistance in applying for available grants or loans as needed to pay for network(s) expenses. STN may also be able to leverage relationships with local county governments to utilize their existing resources, such as water towers and radio antennas.

5. PROJECT LOCATION

The map below shows the geographic region of the project location; the CR16 area is circled in red, while the CR17 is circled in orange. The circle sizes depict a 1 mile radius area. The STN backbone is depicted with a bright green line.



A second region of interest is Reading Center/Preemption Road in Schuyler County, NY. The map below shows the geographic region of the project location, the Preemption Road area is circled in light blue, while Reading Center is circled in orange. The circle sizes depict a 1 mile radius area. The STN backbone is depicted with a bright green line.



The chart below shows the approximate number of homes and businesses for each area.

Area	Residences
CR16	50
CR17	114
Preemption Road	133
<u>Reading Center</u>	135
Total Opportunities	432

6. SCHEDULED TIMELINE

Through this RFP, STN is looking for a primary last-mile partner, or partners, to build out in this region, with the goal of having this initial pilot underway in the coming months. Responders are encouraged to provide project milestones, locations, and delivery schedules as to project roll out and expected access to STN assets.

7. PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF RESPONSES

Only those responses received by the stated deadline will be considered. All information submitted by the deadline will be reviewed and evaluated. Responses that lack sufficient information may cause STN to disqualify that Vendor from consideration for partnership.

STN shall reserve the right to cancel, suspend, and/or discontinue any proposal at any time they deem necessary or fit without obligation or notice to the proposing Vendor. Key selection criteria selection shall include:

1. Quality of response
2. Extent of the service area and services to be offered
3. Technical quality of design and support plan
4. Experience of project team
5. References
6. Vendor(s) experience
7. Financial strength of Vendor(s)
8. Feasibility of Vendor(s) financial response

Further consideration shall be given to the following:

Provider Solutions

Vendor(s) are encouraged to propose solutions that provide coverage over the full pilot project location. If a Vendor chooses to propose on less than the full project location, Vendor must provide details as to the specific service area(s) for which it is proposing, including technologies proposed and explanation of STN assets most needed to make the solution feasible. STN may make the dark fiber and other assets available through a number of different strategies, including but not limited to IRUs, leases, and revenue sharing. Responders are encouraged to submit other strategies for consideration.

Response should include details on proposed pilot, if needed, and roll out schedules. Vendor(s) shall include the use of maps or other diagrams as necessary to sufficiently allow STN to review Vendor's solution. Vendor(s) should describe by proposed service area, the last-mile services to be provided, including capabilities expected to be available to the entities within the proposed area of service. The service area is defined as the geographic area within which the proposed network solution will be deployed. Services to be provided are defined as the type, level, and capacities of the services that the Vendor(s) anticipates providing to end customers (e.g. 25 x 5 Mbps fixed wireless, 100 x 100 Mbps FTTH, etc.).

Vendor Qualifications

Vendors must demonstrate and provide evidence of the following in their responses:

1. Experience in high-speed network design and operation. Vendor(s) should provide a statement of experience highlighting similar network systems that it has designed, constructed, and operated, including project name, location, size, technology used, and names and phone numbers for reference contacts. Also, the response should indicate whether each system is owned by the Vendor(s) or another entity. Any experience designing systems utilizing electric assets (poles, etc.), should be noted.
2. Financial stability. Vendor(s) shall submit the two most recent annual audited financial statements to permit analysis of financial resources.
3. Staff technical and managerial experience. Vendor(s) should include a statement of experience and resumes of key members that would be involved in a project.

In addition to the above criteria, the evaluation team will examine the extent to which each response meets the criteria below, which are not listed in order of importance. The evaluation team will then undertake a comparative assessment of all responses to make a decision as to which responses should be selected for further analysis and negotiation. These additional criteria include:

1. The extent to which the response meets the objectives for the Network(s) (as set out in Section 2);
2. The capability of the Vendor or coalition of Vendors to design, construct, finance, maintain, support, upgrade, and operate the Network(s);
3. The nature, scope, and impact of any legislative and/or regulatory changes (state or local) that are necessary to facilitate the response;
4. The extent to which the response departs from the RFP and from STN's proposed terms; and
5. The location and size of the service area that a Vendor is proposing.

8. PROJECT PROPOSAL EXPECTATIONS

STN shall review and award at its own discretion a contract or contracts to Vendors whose responses best accommodate the various project requirements. STN reserves the right to negotiate partnerships and award contract(s) to more than one responder and refuse any response or contract without obligation to either STN or to any Vendor offering or submitting information.

9. DEADLINE TO SUBMIT PROPOSAL

All proposals must be received by STN no later than the RFP Submission Deadline for consideration in the project proposal selection process. Responses received after the deadline will not be considered. Responses must be submitted electronically or via priority or certified mail.

10. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORMAT

The following is a list of information that the Vendor should include in their proposal submission:

1. Vendor's name(s)
2. Vendor's address
3. Vendor's contact information (and preferred method of communication)
4. Legal form of Vendor (e.g. sole proprietor, partnership, corporation)
5. Vendor's Federal Employee Identification Number (FEIN)
6. Evidence of legal authority to conduct business in New York (e.g. business license number)

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Construction

Vendors are responsible for all costs for construction of fiber or other assets as needed in areas where Vendor(s) need/demand exists but no current asset is available. In such scenarios, the Vendor(s) may also contract with STN to assist in the construction of new fiber or assets. These fees will be negotiated between the Vendor(s) and STN as necessary.

Availability of Fiber

STN will make the fiber and other assets available through a number of different strategies, including but not limited to IRUs, leases, and revenue sharing. Responders are encouraged to submit other strategies for consideration. Review and acceptance will be the sole responsibility of Southern Tier Network.

Rights of Way

Construction and installation of equipment in the STN, State, local, and independently-owned rights-of-way will be subject to the applicable requirements and ordinances governing ROW and easements. Vendor(s) will be responsible for securing all needed rights-of-way, easements, franchise agreements, etc. needed to implement proposed solutions.

Vendor Relationship

The relationship between the Vendor and STN shall be that of a vendor. STN shall share no liability of proposing Vendor(s) cost structures and/or services provided unless identified, negotiated, and agreed to up front by all parties in writing. Unless otherwise negotiated, approved, and documented by STN, the Vendor(s) selected shall bear all of the capital costs of the solutions proposed and implemented by said Vendor, including but not limited to design, engineering, construction, and equipment costs for the network(s) up to the end user drop point or network(s) interface device. In addition, the Vendor(s) will bear all the operating and maintenance costs, including insurance costs and relevant taxes, of the network(s). Vendor(s) should also demonstrate a clear and continuous upgrade path for the network(s) and its ability to meet future consumer demand and service departments.

SOUTHERN TIER NETWORK

FIBER OPTIC FOOTPRINT: STEUBEN, SCHUYLER,
CHEMUNG, YATES COUNTIES

Date: 6/16/2017

