

Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request



Requested Meeting Date: November 14,2023

Title of Item: Motion for letter of support- East Central Energy Broadband project

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REGULAR AGENDA	Action Requested:	Direction Requested				
	Approve/Deny Motion	Discussion Item				
	Adopt Resolution (attach dr	aft) Hold Public Hearing* e copy of hearing notice that was published				
Submitted by: Department:						
Mark Jeffers	Administration					
Presenter (Name and Title): Mark Jeffers, Economic Development	Estimated Time Needed: 5 minutes					
Summary of Issue:						
The Aitkin County Economic Develop Energy's grant application to the state		est for a letter of support for East Central				
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments: Recommended Action/Motion: Economic Development requests approval of a motion to forward a letter of support. Financial Impact: Is there a cost associated with this request? Yes What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$						
What is the total cost, with tax and Is this budgeted? Yes	No Please Exp	lain:				



East Central Energy HOME GROWN, MEMBER OWNED, **COMMUNITY** FOCUSED

Rural electric co-ops are the fastest growing segment of broadband providers. East Central Energy powers some of the **most under-served counties** in the state. With the right funding, our electric grid can be leveraged to provide residential broadband and improve the overall quality of life for over 123,000 residents.

64,374 MEMBERS SERVED 8,473 MILES OF LINE COUNTIES **180 •** EMPLOYEES

ECE is uniquely positioned to deliver broadband service to rural parts of Minnesota. We already have a deep relationship with our member-owners, plus we maintain a longer-term view of infrastructure investments.

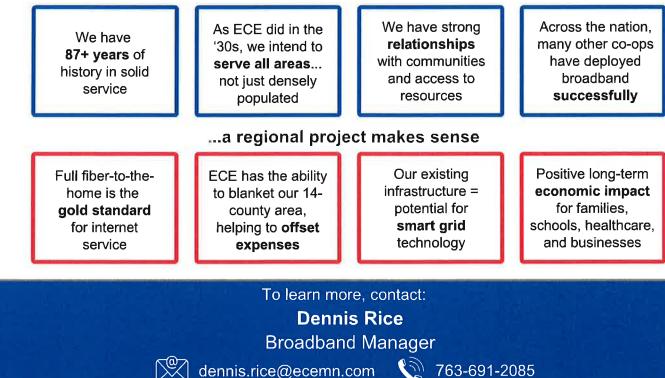
Headquartered in Braham, MN, East Central Energy is Minnesota's third largest member-owned electric cooperative.



763-691-2085

What makes East Central Energy the broadband provider of choice?

As a not-for-profit organization...



Minnesota Border-to-Border Grant Scope -Kanabec County

The Minnesota Office of Broadband has opened the FY 2024 grant window and allocated \$50M to bettering high-speed internet services throughout Minnesota. ECE will be applying for three grants, which are due on December 7, 2023. One of the three grants will directly impact Kanabec County. The Border-to-Border application awards points for community participation letters of support and financial commitment. The table below shows how much of each township/city would be served with high-speed internet if this grant is approved.

	Sq Miles	% of County		
Pine Central	132			
Kanabec County	67	12.5%		
Pine County	65	4.6%		
Pine North	117			
Pine County	83	5.8%		
Aitkin County	35	1.7%		
Mille Lacs South	91			
Isanti County	14	3.0%		
Mille Lacs County	78	11.4%		
Total Kanabec	148			

"Community Engagement" wording from the B2B grant application:

Critical Need/Community Participation: 0 to 15 points possible

Addition scoring points will be awarded for the following:

- Project applications must identify why there is a critical need for the proposed project as it relates to access, affordability, reliability and/or consistency (in addition to being a scoring factor, applicants that do not address the critical need for their project may be disqualified from consideration)
- Verified financial commitment to the project from any qualified community partner(s) [Community partner may be any public, private, non-profit, or philanthropic entity – this would include a businesse county township, gits tribal entity or community conlision]

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- would include a business, county, township, city, tribal entity, or community coalition]
- Projects that propose to serve or partially serve federally recognized tribal lands, and the associated tribal entity has provided application documentation of project support
- Project applications that provide substantive evidence of community support for the project



MN Border-to-Border Round 9 Grant Scope -Township Breakdown

Pine Central							
Townships	Sq Miles	% of Township	Underserved	Unserved	Total Service Points		
Kanabec County				原告税の			
Kroschel Township	8.7	24%	13	31	44		
Peace Township	19.8	52%	56	186	242		
Pomroy Township	37.1	98%	54	182	236		
Whited Township	0.8	3%	-	6	6		
Pine County	And In Provide State	1					
Brook Park City	1.0	100%	13	58	71		
Brook Park Township	20.6	69%	23	136	159		
Hinckley Township	23.9	67%	77	181	258		
Mission Creek Township	19.2	60%	35	119	154		
Pokegama Township	0.7	1%		8	8		
Total	132		271	907	1,178		





Aitkin County Government Center 307 2nd Street NW, Room 316 Aitkin, MN 56431

November 14, 2023

East Central Energy ATTN: ECE Board of Directors 412 Main Avenue North Braham, MN. 55006

RE: ECE Letter of Support

Aitkin County would like to express our support for East Central Energy's Broadband Project for the MN Border-to-Border Round 9 grant program.

ECE's efforts will provide access to high-speed internet for many of our community members that currently do not have adequate internet access, or no internet access at all. These residents currently struggle with slow internet speed and poor connectivity—some residents have NO access to broadband—which adversely impacts school, work, and healthcare for these families.

This grant opportunity would greatly improve the quality of life for Aitkin County residents. Improving broadband to our residents in one of our highest priorities in Aitkin County. Currently, Aitkin County is 74th out of 87 counties for broadband access to under-served or un-served residents.

Aitkin County strongly supports this project and would appreciate your consideration of ECE's MN Border-to-Border Round 9 grant application.

Thank you for your consideration,

J Mark Wedel County Commissioner, Board Chair Aitkin County