



Edgecombe County Housing & Economic Development Office
201 St. Andrew St. – PO Box 10
Tarboro, NC 27886

Phone (252) 641-5775
Fax (252) 641-1230

February 23, 2009

Dear Offeror:

Edgecombe County is requesting proposals from qualified broadband engineering firms to conduct a broadband deployment propagation and feasibility study. This project received support from The Golden LEAF Foundation. Attached is a detailed request for proposal further describing project and proposal submission requirements.

You are invited to submit a proposal to be received not later than **10:00 AM, Friday, March 27, 2008** to Eric Evans, Community Development Administrator, PO Box 10, 201 St. Andrew Street Room 421, Tarboro, NC, 27886-0010. Telephone (252) 641-5775. Two (2) copies of the proposal must be submitted in one sealed envelope clearly marked with the description "*Edgecombe County Broadband RFP*".

Edgecombe County will enter into a contract with the firm whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the county, cost and other factors considered. Factors to be considered, the method used in the evaluation of the proposal and selection of the firm are set forth in the RFP. Edgecombe County encourages proposals from small, minority and female-owned businesses; and does not discriminate on the basis of handicap status.

If you have any questions concerning the Request for Proposal, please do not hesitate to call me at (252) 641-5775 or email at ericevans@co.edgecombe.nc.us.

Sincerely,

Eric Evans,
Community Development Administrator

Requests Proposals for Proposals
Broadband Engineering Consultant Services
Edgecombe County Broadband Deployment Propagation and Feasibility Study

A. Background and Statement of Need

Edgecombe County is an eastern North Carolina county that is rich in history but ready for the future. Edgecombe is a rural county situated approximately one hour's drive east of Raleigh and two hour's drive inland from North Carolina's beaches. The 2000 Census totaled the county's population at 55,606, disbursed between the 10 municipalities and unincorporated areas. The county seat is the Town of Tarboro, and the largest municipality is the City of Rocky Mount.

The economic challenges that we in Edgecombe County face are numerous. In the midst of rebuilding from the devastation of Hurricane Floyd, we have experienced an economic downturn that resulted in the County consistently having one of the highest unemployment rates in the state. We understand now that the economy has transitioned, and innovation is crucial. For Edgecombe County to survive and succeed, we have to retool and innovate. Broadband access has proven to be one of the main catalysts for that innovation.

The E-NC Authority reports that 77% of Edgecombe County's households have **access** high-speed internet, but most of that is provided through cable modem service and DSL. Though these technologies do meet the FCC definition of "high speed", they are both still limiting in their applications considering most cutting edge technology and software require much faster data speeds.

Another key factor is **affordability**. Though access has come to be used as the gauge to measure 21st Century readiness, an even more crucial dynamic is not just that it's available, but can the citizens afford it. Considering the high rate of poverty and unemployment in Edgecombe County, many of our citizens will simply choose not to sign up for even the fastest and most reliable internet services if they cannot afford it.

In addition, Edgecombe County Public Schools recently implemented the first phase of its 1:1 Laptop Initiative. Approximately 2,100 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students and 400 teachers received laptops. Many of these students live in rural areas of the county where broadband is either not available or not affordable. Optimal use of these laptops will depend on these students and teachers having access to affordable broadband service. Also, many students enrolled at Edgecombe Community College cannot take advantage of online course offerings without broadband.

B. Project Overview

Based on the input received through a community engagement process, Edgecombe County citizens agreed that availability and affordability of high speed internet access is vital to our County. Therefore, Edgecombe County proposes to use Golden LEAF funds to expand high speed internet access in the County. Through this Request for Proposal process, we hope to find a Broadband Engineering Consultant who will conduct a broadband feasibility study to determine the extent of the need and the most feasible broadband solution. Ultimately we hope to secure additional funding to implement the proposed broadband deployment strategies to provide the most optimal and feasible broadband access, with a priority given to meeting the needs of students participating in the 1:1 laptop initiative as well as Edgecombe Community College students seeking online courses and distance learning opportunities.

The goals in implementing this project is to provide broadband coverage to as much of the county as financially feasible, with first consideration for deployment to cover students in the one-to-one laptop program and community college students. It is also our goal to create a network and customer base that is at a minimum self-supporting. Therefore, based on the business model to be identified in the feasibility study, broadband coverage will be deployed as far as revenue generated will cover at least operating costs.

C. Scope of Work

This RFP is for qualified broadband engineering and consulting firms interested in assisting the County in a feasibility study to determine the optimum course of action for a multi-use broadband network through:

- Conducting stakeholder analysis
- Providing network architecture and technology recommendations
- Doing a high level site survey and network design
- Developing a financial model and business plan for the network

We have interest in expanding broadband access throughout the county via wireless and/or fiber network capable of providing both fixed and mobile services to public safety, utility and other internal County departments as well as broadband access for residents, students and businesses in the County. Various technologies, vendors, frequencies and topologies will be considered as well as associated back-office, funding, business modeling and security issues will be considered in this scope of work.

The County expects the vendor to:

1. determine the optimal broadband technology;
2. provide network design services;
3. calculate network capacity requirements;
4. determine high priority and alternate network attachment sites;
5. recommend security options;
6. provide a frequency review and analysis of existing and potential frequency use in the County;
7. present network management options;
8. map preliminary network nodes based on site survey;
9. map County structures, residential areas and businesses; and
10. Provide financial modeling, grant planning assistance and financial planning options.

The scope of work is expected to last 30-60 days. Once completed, the County may develop an RFP for vendors to respond to the proposed deployment plan as developed.

D. Selection Procedures/Project Schedule

The engineering firm chosen must have the following minimum qualifications:

- Experience in designing and deploying wireless broadband networks for municipalities, public safety, utilities or service providers.
- Experience in providing wireless broadband business planning services to municipalities and/or service providers. The County is interested only in projects that have been successfully completed or are showing a pathway to successful completion.
- A proven financial modeling tool to assist in demonstrating the savings and overall network and operational costs associated a network of this sort.
- In-house software and hardware tools to both perform site surveys, propagation analysis (PTP and PMP) and produce engineering reports and designs
- Experience in WiFi, pre-WiMAX, licensed PTP links, 900MHz and fiber technologies.
- Proven experience performing technology assessment for municipalities and or service providers for the purpose of technology vendor selection.

A determination as to the firm selected for the described services will be made by the County of Edgecombe. Determination will be made based upon the following criteria:

1. Quality and responsiveness of proposal.

2. Comprehensiveness of proposal.
3. Knowledge, experience, and capacity of the firm to carry out the aforementioned scope of work.
4. Knowledge and experience of the firm in the area of relevant rules, regulations and governmental procedures.
5. Timeliness of proposed implementation of services.
6. Reasonableness of costs.

E. Proposed Timeline

Proposal Due Date and Time:	March 27, 2009 at 10:00 AM
Proposal Selection	April 3, 2009
Contract Award	April 6, 2009
Propagation and Feasibility Study Target Date to Begin:	April 20, 2009

F. Proposal Content

The Offeror is to submit a proposal that clearly states the bid amount. The amount quoted should include fringe benefits, indirect costs, profit, and all expenses incurred by the firm. The total price quoted will be considered a not-to-exceed cost, and should be valid cost from the Offeror for at least sixty (60) days.

The proposal must also contain these four parts:

1. **Technical.** Describe the approach to be taken in addressing the proposed scope of work. This description is to include a listing of specific tasks identified as well as others you feel are required to properly implement the project. Include a description as to how the work is to be performed. Be sure to include a list of sub-contractors is proposed.
2. **Management and Staffing.** Describe the management plan to be used, staffing configurations that will be working on the project. This is to include a project schedule showing start and completion dates for all major tasks. A brief resume of the individuals involved in the project will be required.

3. **Prior Related Experience.** Provide a brief description of experience in related projects including contact person and phone numbers for each referenced job. Include experience with projects as similar to this project as possible.

G. Evaluation Criteria

The following factors will be used in evaluating the firm's proposals and awarding of contract:

1. Technical Approach/Understanding of Program. (25 points)
2. Work Management Plan/Experience of Proposed Personnel. (25 points)
3. Relevant Experience of the Firm. (25 points)
4. Bid Summary. (25 points)

H. Proposal Submission

Two (2) copies of the proposal must be submitted in one sealed envelope clearly marked with the description "*Edgecombe County Broadband RFP*". Your proposal should be no more than 20 pages in length. Proposals are to be submitted no later than **10:00 am on March 27, 2009**. Proposals will be opened promptly at that time, and no other proposals will be considered once the first proposal has been opened.

Mail to:

Eric Evans
PO Box 10
Tarboro, NC 27886

Deliver to:

Eric Evans
201 St. Andrew St.
County Manager's Office, Room 421
Tarboro, NC 27886

For questions call (252) 641-5775 or email ericevans@co.edgecombe.nc.us