

From: Lembo, Comptroller [mailto:Comptroller.Lembo@ct.gov]

Sent: Friday, November 21, 2014 10:50 AM

Subject: Bring Ultra High Speed Broadband Internet to your Municipality

November 21, 2014

Dear Town Leader,

I hope this letter will serve as a call to action – an invitation to join a growing economic development movement in Connecticut. Municipalities across the state are banding together to push for the development of gigabit broadband service for their residents and businesses.

To put it simply, gigabit broadband service would rapidly deliver information – serving as a superhighway for researchers, schools, businesses large and small and every household. It would be the ultimate economic assistance and incentive program because it would reward all business and industries – new ones and those already established here -- with a superior infrastructure and an open door.

To achieve this, I invite and encourage you to join other Connecticut municipalities that have issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) – essentially a request for information from interested parties to deliver ultra-high-speed gigabit networks in your communities. There is no cost to your municipality in taking this important step.

In other areas of the country and in nations across the globe the development of gigabit networks is spurring innovation, attracting economic development and improving service while reducing costs for broadband consumers.

A gigabit broadband network is capable of 1,000 megabit per second (Mbps) upload and download speeds. The current average speed in Connecticut is only 9 Mbps download and even slower upload. The current state of Connecticut’s broadband infrastructure is unacceptable and must be addressed.

The development of gigabit networks in areas like Kansas City, MO; Austin, TX; and Chattanooga, TN are spurring new start-up communities and attracting new corporate residents. Meanwhile, customer service has improved and costs for high-speed broadband have reduced from in some cases several thousand dollars a month to approximately $70/month. For residential consumers of cable, phone and internet services the costs for bundled services has reduced significantly.

The economic benefits are real. At recent forums hosted by the Office of Consumer Counsel and CT Technology Council, companies complained about the extreme cost of receiving ultra-high speed broadband service under our existing infrastructure, and the enormous benefits that a gigabit network could provide in some of the state’s most high-tech fields like bio-tech, precision manufacturing and technology companies. In one memorable instance a multi-national corporation with a precision manufacturing facility in New Haven stated that the only other location in the world in which the company struggled to receive necessary gigabit broadband service was in a rural Mexican town.

Joining the RFQ indicates your municipality’s commitment to bring gigabit broadband service to your residents and businesses. Participation does not involve any legal or financial commitment on the part of your municipality. Instead municipalities are offering to be infrastructure and policy partners by contributing in-kind assets and support.

As a small state with high population density we have a real opportunity to leapfrog other states by having access to gigabit broadband service statewide. Gigabit broadband networks are coming. Connecticut can get on board or be left behind. I’m calling on municipal leaders in all of the state’s 169 towns to join New Haven, Stamford and West Hartford in soliciting partners to develop gigabit broadband service in municipalities across the state.

Interested municipalities may join the RFQ by submitting a Municipal Addendum. Instructions for submission are available at http://ct.gov/occ and http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/PurchasingBureauOnline/index.asp. (note: a user may sign with a phone number in lieu of a tax ID number).

I look forward to discussing this initiative with you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

 

Kevin Lembo

State Comptroller