Electric Coop Fiber Broadband Workshop –Blueprint of Rural FTTH Success

<u>**Thursday October 3, 2019**</u>

1:00-1:30pm – Keynote speaker

1:30-2:00pm – The Power of Cooperatives

Why electric cooperatives are the answer. Legislation has passed, so the barriers are down. It's time to act and the time is now.

<u>Speaker:</u>

Michael Callahan, CEO, Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi

2:00-3:00pm – Business plan: Beyond a feasibility study, building a business plan that works.

A comprehensive, accurate and realistic business plan is the critical first step for any broadband deployment. This session takes a holistic and thorough approach to assessing the co-op's ability to successfully deploy a fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network. We will dive into every aspect of infrastructure, operations and the business model to first determine if broadband makes sense for your co-op, and if so, how to deploy and operate in the most efficient way. This session covers what all a feasibility studies entail and how to present a successful business plan to a cooperative board of directors.

<u>Speakers:</u>

Randy Klindt, Partner, Conexon

Brad Hicks, President/CEO, Habersham Electric Cooperative

Chris Davis, CEO, Cumberland Electric Membership Cooperative

3:00-3:15pm – Break

3:15-4:15pm – Funding: More than $20 BILLION available to electric cooperatives.

The government has been investing in rural telecommunications infrastructure for decades. There are current and future programs (CAF, State, County, RUS and RDOLF) offering billions in grants and loans for broadband connectivity and rural communities. In this session, we will discuss how to navigate through the current and future funding opportunities and prepare your application.

In 2018, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) awarded more than $186 million in broadband funding to a consortium of electric cooperatives to build out Gigabit-capable networks. It was the largest and most successful bidding consortium in FCC history – one assembled, designed and led by Conexon.

Speakers:

Johnathan Chambers, Partner, Conexon

Gary Wood, CEO, Central Virginia Electric Cooperative

Jim Bagley, CEO, United Electric Cooperative

4:15-5:15pm – Network Design: Innovative design strategies for rural fiber deployment.

The challenge of designing a fiber network can be daunting for even the most progressive electric cooperatives. From completing ride-outs, determining infrastructure viability, manually mapping fiber routes to ultimately designing a fiber network and planning for high adoption, the process is often slow, inefficient and expensive.

In this session, Industry experts speak on drastically reduce the overall construction cost of building a fiber network with creative design and architecture philosophies.

Speakers:

Randy Klindt, Partner, Conexon

Mike Byrne, VP of Information Systems, Conexon

Doug Dowling, Director, CommScope

Mark Winick, Manager Field Applications Engineering, CommScope

6:00-8:00pm – Reception

Friday October 4, 2019

7:00-8:00am – Breakfast

8:00-9:00am – Construction management: Managing the complexity of a multi-million dollar construction project

Building a broadband network is a massive undertaking for an electric cooperative, one with high rewards – enhanced member satisfaction, new business revenue and growth opportunities – and high risk. 80% of the overall deployment cost is outside plant and design technology. Co-op broadband success hinges on the ability to construct and operate a new business from the ground up, without sacrificing service or investments on your electric side.

In this session, industry experts speak on their deployment strategies, vendor RFP bidding process for make-ready engineering, make-ready construction, material vendors, and fiber construction to ensure a fair and transparent process.

Speakers:

Jeff Fincannon, VP of OSP and Construction, Conexon

Sean Vanslyke, CEO, SEMO Electric Cooperative

Bo Gresham, Vice President, Ervin Cable Construction

9:00-9:15am – Break

9:15-10:15am – Network operations: Best Practices of operating and supporting a fiber network
Electric cooperatives have unmatched commitment to their members providing accessible, affordable and reliable service. That same commitment holds true with cooperative-built fiber-to-the-home networks.

This session covers all areas of operations from choosing equipment vendors, setting up a network and implementing the most efficient back office solutions.

Speakers:

Andy Burger, VP of Operations, Conexon

Barret Ewing, Director Network Engineering, Wave Rural

Brandon Fisher, Technology and Communications Manager, Wave Rural

Bob Carrick, Senior Solutions Specialist, Support Cloud, Calix

10:15-11:15am – Marketing: The often overlooked secret key to success.

One of the critical element of a successful broadband deployment is putting together at marketing plan to roll out the co-op membership, starting day one. This plan should be dynamic in nature and is an area that requires a lot of attention.

In this session, we will break down marketing into two components; 1. Brand establishment and recognition, 2. Marketing in a competitive environment. Industry experts will speak on the launch of their broadband subsidiary, the effective marketing strategies they have implemented and how those have evolved as they continue to grow and expand fiber throughout their coop territory. They will dive into strategies they have successfully executed on to increase both member/subscriber retention and ARPU.
Speakers:

David Girvan, COO, United Fiber

David Goodspeed, President, OEC Fiber

Loyd Rice, Manager of Fiber Services, GoSEMO

Carl Meyerhoefer, VP of Marketing, Calix

11:15-11:30am – General discussion and questions

11:30am – Workshop Concludes