

To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to recommend Byers Engineering Company to other BIP or BTOP awardees to provide engineering, deployment management, contract administration, oversight, compliance management and reporting.

Byers came to Hardy with an already outstanding reputation in the industry. In addition, the Byers team was well prepared with solid research in the requirements of the BIP and BTOP programs and a well developed strategy for Hardy to participate in Broadband Stimulus funding. We retained Byers in 2009 to assist us in the pre-application research, design/engineering, identification of unserved and underserved areas, and business and financial planning required to develop our dual BIP/BTOP application in the first funding round. Byers assisted Hardy by researching and drafting the narratives for our application and preparing or reviewing all of the required schedules and attachments. The Byers team acted as the "go to" organization with questions from Hardy management and staff all during the process. Byers ensured that our application and attachments were in full compliance with the objectives and regulatory requirements of the BTOP and BIP programs. When Hardy was notified that its application had proceeded to BTOP due diligence, the Byers team rapidly assembled to support Hardy through that process by preparing or reviewing all responses, schedules, maps and diagrams. Hardy received a Round 1 BTOP Middle Mile Infrastructure award in February, 2010.

Hardy retained the Byers team again in February, 2010 to assist Hardy with the development and submission of a Round 2 BIP Stimulus application for a Fiber-to-the Premise network and Triple Play services. Once again, the Byers team supported Hardy with all the tasks required to research, develop and submit our application. The Byers team also assisted Hardy with filing Public Notice Responses to other applications within our service area. Hardy was notified on July 2, in the first announcement of Round 2 awards, that our BIP application had also received an award.

Byers currently provides engineering and project management of our deployment, compliance management, contract administration and oversight. Byers has a long and successful history of RUS-funded project completion. Given the very high quality of the Byers' team, Hardy is assured that its deployment will be performed in the best possible way, on time, and meet all BTOP and BIP requirements.

The Byers team has demonstrated tremendous knowledge and expertise in every area of the telecommunications business, from technical and engineering, to business and financial, to telecommunications and BIP and BTOP regulatory requirements, to grant writing, to deployment management, to compliance and reporting. The Byers' team has been highly responsive to our needs for rapid turnarounds and has managed compliance without a hitch. The team has demonstrated their commitment to our success by doing whatever it takes, sometimes on very short notice over impossibly long days and nights, and they have taken the extra time to check every detail thoroughly. We have heard that our applications were in the top tier of applications submitted for quality, completeness and attention to detail.

Hardy Telecommunications considers Byers Engineering to be a key partner in our success and will continue to work with the firm through completion of our projects and beyond. Please feel free to call on me if you have any questions about the quality of the work provided by the Byers Team.

Respectfully,



Scott Sherman, General Manager

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TWO SECTIONS -16 PAGES 94¢

Hardy Times
Things to do
Things to know

Corrections

In the June 23, 2010 story entitled "Veterinary Hospital Proposed for US 220 South of Moorefield," Dr. Lesley Kessel Parisi's name was spelled incorrectly. The Examiner regrets the error.

In last weeks story entitled "OEM/911 Holds Mock Disaster Drill," there were several mistakes/omissions.

The disaster drill was a collaboration between the Hardy County OEM/911 Center and the State Railroad Authority.

Fraley Ambulance Service participated in the drill, as did Andrea Walters from the Fraley Triage Unit, who assisted Tammy Gilhuys in preparing the "injured."

The New Creek Fire Department came early to assist in preparation for the drill.

Hardy County OEM/911 Director Paul Lewis worked to coordinate the communications.

The Examiner regrets these errors and omissions.

Free Sports Physicals

Free sports physicals are available at Hardy County Medical on July 15

Hardy Telecom Receives \$31 Million to Bring Fiber Technology to Hardy County

By Jean A. Flanagan
Moorefield Examiner

Over the next two years, Hardy Telecommunications will be installing fiber optic technology across Hardy County thanks to a \$31 million grant/loan package recently awarded by the US Department of Agriculture Rural Development.

USDA-RD State Director for West Virginia Bobby Lewis visited Hardy Telecom's corporate headquarters in Lost River on Thursday to present a certificate of congratulations and tour the facility. He was welcomed by General Manager Scott Sherman.

Sherman remarked that when Hardy Telecommunications was formed in 1953 to bring basic telephone service to the area, "because no other companies found it profitable to do so," the USDA Rural Utilities Service was instrumental in that success.

"Without the RUS over the years, we would not be standing here today," he said. "And without this significant loan/grant, we would not be moving ahead to help our citizens meet the challenges of the future."

Sherman also acknowledged the support of Sen. Jay Rockefeller, the late Sen. Robert Byrd, Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito and Governor Joe Manchin.

The project, Hardy OneNet Fiber-to-the-Home, will allow homes and business in Hardy County to receive digital telephone service, high-speed broadband Internet access and high definition television service. The high definition television service will allow expanded content, which can include stations such as WHSV-TV3 from Harrisonburg.

Many Hardy County residents lost access to WHSV when the television industry switched from analog to digital signals last year.

Fiber optic technology allows information, called bandwidth, to be carried through pulses of light over hair-thin wires without degradation.

"The capabilities of fiber optics far exceed those of copper," Sherman explained. "Copper can also carry high bandwidth, but for only a few hundred yards, after which the signal begins to degrade. Other currently available technologies, such as wireless technology, simply do not have the capabilities to offer the quality

Continued on page 8



Photo by Jean Flanagan

From left, Gerald Smith, Greg Zirk, Arlie Funk, General Manager Scott Sherman, President of the Board Phyllis Cook, Chris Strovel representing Congresswoman Capito, Loring Barr, Bobby Lewis, Hardy County Commission President Stanley Moyer and Del. Harold Michael.

Hardy Telecom Receives.....

Continued from page 1

and range of services that fiber offers."

Lewis talked about the impact fiber optic infrastructure can have on a rural community.

"Only half of rural residents subscribe to broadband because too many communities in rural America don't have adequate access to broadband infrastructure," he said. "Farmers and ranchers will have up-to-the-minute commodity and weather information. Schools can expand limited course offerings through distance learning. First responders will have information they need to keep their communities safer. Rural health care will improve as medical specialists will be able to use telemedicine to provide advanced diagnosis for patients or to consult with colleagues at other hospitals."

Lewis gave credit to the Obama administration and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for funding 66 new broadband projects nationwide. "These projects will not only directly create 5,000 jobs up front, but spur economic development in some of the nation's hardest-hit communities, creating jobs for years to come."

The Hardy Telecommunications award was the only one awarded in West Virginia.

Lewis said the benefit of having the latest in information technology

is that a young person doesn't have to move to the nearest city to make a living. Businesses that would normally locate or expand in larger cities because of the availability of services can consider Hardy County.

"We want every parent in rural America to be able to look at their child and tell them that their home town has the economic opportunities necessary to offer them a bright future," he said. "The message is - you can stay here and work. You don't have to leave."

State Delegate Harold Michael called the occasion "a historic day for Hardy County."

He compared it to the electrification of the county.

"At this point, we don't realize the impact this will have on the future," he said. "When this is done, Hardy County will be number one in providing communication technology in the state."

Michael commended Sherman and the staff at Hardy Telecommunications for their work in securing the grant/loan. The application process took months and reams of information to complete.

The package includes a \$9,494,483 loan and a \$22,153,791 grant for a total of \$33,648,274.

Sherman explained the construction and electronics will be sent out for bid according to USDA-RD procedures. "I will request that the com-

panies involved hire a certain percentage of local people to work on the project," he said.

In terms of job creation, Sherman envisions around 100 people working on initial construction and between 30 and 40 on hookups. While they are not "skilled" jobs, they do require a certain amount of experience, Sherman said.

"Eastern (WV Community and Technical College) had a fiber optic pilot program a few years ago," he said. "I'm going to ask them to reinstitute that program again."

"The hope is that businesses will take a hard look at Hardy County in the next few years. We hear about the increase in call centers and data center. This technology will enable them to look at Hardy County for those types of businesses."

Marketing Director Derek Barr said Hardy Telecom will be embarking on an aggressive community education program to let residents and businesses know what the new technology can offer.

"We took a survey about three years ago, and our customers said they wanted cell phone service and television service," he said. "We have cell service in the majority of the county and will soon be able to offer digital, high definition television as well."