

Mid-State Consultants, Inc. Newsletter, 2nd Quarter 2014



Make the FCC Happy, and Ultimately They Will Make All of Us Happy – we hope.

Your FCC five year plan, as part of Form 481 reporting requirements, is due July 1. Attached is our summary of what the FCC requires, and what we think is important to include in your plan. Our impression is that the FCC will analyze closely what the plans say, and may set procedures and regulations based on what they learn. Because of this, we believe it is vital to tell the FCC what you want to do, and how much support you will need to do it. If you turn in what the FCC thinks is the perfect plan, perhaps they will choose yours as the future ‘template’. We don’t see much downside to this; although if you don’t turn in a well-considered and thoughtful plan obviously you will have little or no influence. Your plan should also include conditional commitments along the lines of, “If we don’t receive sufficient support we may not be able to ...”

It appears to us that very few telcos have turned in a plan yet. We are working on this with several clients, and are developing basic templates. If you are interested in more information, please let us know. You can respond directly to this email, and we will route your message accordingly.

Access Technology

We think the FCC is hoping to see every telco propose FTTP, sooner or later. But, we also believe that they see it as just too expensive in some areas. The FCC seemed to be pushing satellite service for the most rural areas, but appears to have realized that satellites can’t solve rural America’s bandwidth problems. A wireless local loop (WLL) strategy may be the perfect interim step in the highest-cost areas. WLL can’t provide the kind of bandwidth that fiber can, and thus isn’t a long-term solution. But it can meet all the FCC targets, at least for specific areas. And once the market is established and bandwidth demand grows even more, then the FCC will see that FTTP starts to look more attractive even in high-cost areas. The WLL equipment can then be moved to the most high-cost areas.

We're assembling cost models and project templates for WLL. Let us know if you are interested, or if you have a good wireless plan you think would also benefit others.

We're also updating the info on our website for additional wireless issues

RUS Community Connect Grant program

2014 Community Connect Grant application details have been released. Applications are due July 7. The requirements are essentially the same as in the past, and unfortunately, only \$13 million is available. However, if you are serving Indian Reservations or areas of special consideration (persistent poverty, etc) it may be worth a shot. It is an 85% grant and the requirements aren't difficult. One of the RUS' goals is to spread the money around the country. We've assisted with two recently completed grants and their projects. A summary of the requirements is available at www.mscon.com/newsletter/CCG_summary.pdf

If you have any interest we can fairly quickly pull out the kind of demographics that would let you know your chances.

The USDA also [announced](#) it is making available up to \$19.3 million in Distance Learning and Telemedicine program grants to fund access to rural education, training and health care resources, and [will provide](#) up to \$2 million as part of the USDA's continued support of rural telecommunications and broadcast services.

Some of the issues to be discussed in future Mid-State Consultants newsletters

What's Google doing? Will it affect me?

Advanced DSL and 'g.Fast'

The future of Video services