



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nex-Tech Awarded SPARK Grant Funding

LENORA, Kan, Oct 8, 2020—Nex-Tech received notification that it was awarded SPARK relief funding from the Kansas Department of Commerce. Earlier this year the state of Kansas realized that every corner of the state had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The state of Kansas made emergency financial relief available from federal CARES Act funding. The Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas (SPARK) Task Force approved more than \$130 million in relief funding for economic development and connectivity in the state. These dollars are being awarded in the form of grants to eligible businesses through the Kansas Department of Commerce.

The Lenora-based technology company will receive grant funding of almost \$800,000 that will enable the development of broadband services in unserved and underserved areas of central and western Kansas. These projects will impact almost 450 business and residential customers in eight counties, including Barton, Decatur, Norton, Phillips, Republic, Rooks, Sheridan, and Smith. The SPARK committee created ten grant opportunities and Nex-Tech applied for funding in two of these categories: Broadband Partnership Adoption Grant and Connectivity Emergency Response Grant.

Broadband Partnership Adoption Grant

The Broadband Partnership Adoption Grant provides support for low-income households by partnering with providers and school districts to ensure connectivity to as many Kansans as possible. Expanded connectivity should result in improved opportunities for remote learning, remote working and accessing telehealth/telemedicine services. Nex-Tech was awarded funding of \$33,936 to supplement its Continuous Learning Initiative. With the Continuous Learning Initiative program Nex-Tech can provide free Internet access to eligible students for remote learning from home.

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Connectivity Emergency Response Grant (CERG)

The Connectivity Emergency Response Grant (CERG) was created to address the increased need for Internet connectivity in Kansas in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Proposed projects should improve connectivity to unserved and underserved areas of Kansas to address the needs of telework, telehealth, distance learning and other remote business services. Nex-Tech was awarded \$761,111 for five projects.

- Fixed Wireless Upgrades—This project focuses on six rural areas located in Decatur, Norton, Phillips, Rooks, Sheridan, and Smith Counties. This grant will allow Nex-Tech to upgrade equipment, and approximately 250 customers in these areas can be upgraded to a 25/3 Mbps Internet connection.
- Plainville Lake—This project focuses on rural Plainville located in Rooks County Kansas. Fiber to the premise infrastructure will be deployed allowing one business and three residential customers access to a fiber Internet connection of 25 Mbps up to a Gig connection. This will also provide Wi-Fi connectivity at the recreational area and shelter house at Plainville Lake.
- Rural Republic County—This project will serve six underserved large farms and rural businesses in the Republic County area. These customers will have access to a fiber Internet connection of 25 Mbps up to a Gig connection.
- Prairie Dog State Park—The community of Norton recognized the lack of broadband access at Prairie Dog State Park, but the onslaught of Covid-19 made it much more apparent. Several organizations, including The Norton County Community Foundation, and Norton City/County Economic Development shared the need to add Internet connectivity at the state office and campgrounds. These entities worked with Nex-Tech to submit this grant application, which will result in bringing high-speed Internet to the State Park office and Wi-Fi connectivity to the campground areas. The Norton community and the Kansas State Director of Parks each pledged to support 5% of the cost for the project.
- Rural Great Bend—This project will serve several underserved farms and rural businesses south of Great Bend, including the Barton County Historical Society. These customers will have access to a fiber Internet connection of 25 Mbps up to a Gig connection.

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“We are extremely pleased to have received this grant funding to expand and improve Internet connectivity to customers in Central and Western Kansas,” stated Jimmy Todd, CEO and General Manager of Nex-Tech. “We want to thank the many individuals, businesses and community leaders who wrote letters of support for these projects.”

Since receiving word about the grant funding Nex-Tech has already started working on the Courtland and Scandia fiber project, and they are putting plans in place to begin work on other projects in order to meet the project deadline of December 30, 2020.

About Nex-Tech

Nex-Tech connects thousands of people and businesses through a robust broadband network with cutting-edge technology. Nex-Tech’s powerful network architectures, including fiber-to-the-premise (FTTP) and fiber-to-wireless (FTTW) technologies, deliver leading-edge enterprise solutions to clients nationwide including a 24x7x365 network operations center (NOC), CALEA compliance, enterprise cloud services, security, managed IT, and advertising solutions. Headquartered in Lenora, Kansas, Nex-Tech is 68 years into providing exceptional service to business and residential customers.