

ARKANSAS REGISTER

Proposed Rule Cover Sheet



Secretary of State
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Name of Department _____

Agency or Division Name _____

Other Subdivision or Department, If Applicable _____

Previous Agency Name, If Applicable _____

Contact Person _____

Contact E-mail _____

Contact Phone _____

Name of Rule _____

Newspaper Name _____

Date of Publishing _____

Final Date for Public Comment _____

Location and Time of Public Meeting _____



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

ASA HUTCHINSON | Governor MICHAEL PRESTON | Secretary

DATE: DECEMBER 6, 2019
TO: ALL INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: ARKANSAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
SUBJECT: RULE: "ARKANSAS RURAL CONNECT BROADBAND GRANT PROGRAM"

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Please find attached or available by electronic publication by the Arkansas Economic Development Commission ("AEDC") Proposed Rule, "ARKANSAS RURAL CONNECT BROADBAND GRANT PROGRAM." The Director of AEDC ("Director") is filing for public comment and public hearing a proposed regulation implementing the Governor's Broadband Plan. The proposed Rule proposes to establish eligibility, participation and operation requirements for governmental entities and various other stakeholders to participate in a grant based program to expand broadband coverage in this State through the Arkansas Rural Connect Grant Program (hereafter, the "ARC Program"). This proposed Rule modifies an earlier proposed rule which limited participation in the program to incorporated municipalities. The newly proposed rule no longer has this restriction and establishes eligibility criteria that an area (1) have less than 80% served with broadband coverage, (2) have at least 500 people in the project footprint, and (3) have at least 200 people unserved with broadband coverage. The newly proposed Rule also provides that County judges may now apply on behalf of unincorporated communities or entire counties, and there is a \$3,000 cap per household and an overall project cap of \$2 million or 20% of the ARC funding round budget extends eligibility.

Pursuant to Arkansas Administrative Procedures Act, and other applicable laws or rules, NOTICE is hereby given that a PUBLIC HEARING will be held on January 9, 2020, at 8:30 at the location of the Bessie Moore Conference Room located at the Arkansas State Library, 900 West Capitol Avenue, 2nd Floor, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201.

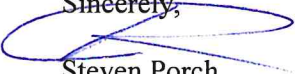
The purpose of the Public Hearing will be to determine whether the Director should adopt the proposed Rule, "ARKANSAS RURAL CONNECT BROADBAND GRANT PROGRAM."

All interested persons are encouraged to make comments, statements or opinions to the address below or attend the Public Hearing and present, orally or in writing, statements, arguments or opinions on the proposed Rule. All licensees and other interested persons are responsible for notifying all their personnel, agents, and employees about this Public Hearing.

Persons wishing to testify or make comments are requested to submit intended statements in writing in advance. Direct your inquiries to: Dr. Nathan Smith, Broadband Manager, 501-682-5464, email: Nathan.smith@arkansas.gov.

A copy of the proposed Rule may be obtained or viewed on the AEDC Web Site at arkansasedc.com/data-reports/rules.

Sincerely,


Steven Porch
Chief Legal Officer
Arkansas Department of Commerce
501-682-1121

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