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**To: ConnectME Authority**  
**Phil Lindley, Executive Director ConnectME**

**RE: Pre-Application Letter – 9<sup>th</sup> Round Grant**

**Project: Fort Fairfield 3RT, Fort Fairfield, ME**

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In response to the Authority's announcement of its Ninth Grant Round, Pioneer Wireless, Inc., dba Pioneer Broadband, ("Pioneer" ) is pleased to submit this Pre-Application letter for our "Fort Fairfield – Limestone Rd RT" DSL project.

**1. Description of service area with emphasis on "unserved":**

We are proposing to install a DSL Access Multiplexer (DSLAM) adjacent to the Remote Terminals (RT) located in the following 3 locations in Fort Fairfield, ME:

Limestone Rd RT  
Center Limestone Rd RT  
North Caribou Rd RT

These terminals serve portions of the northern part of Fort Fairfield that includes approximately 134 unserved households and businesses. The exact service area will be the geographical area covered by the LEC's wire facilities at the RT. Pioneer is in the process of acquiring the exact route of the physical cable plant from the LEC.

**2. Description of communications with other providers:**

We have studied this area and communicated with the other service providers (FairPoint and TimeWarner Cable) in the area. There is no evidence that they have plans to expand into this locale.

**3. Description of project, type of service, technology, speed, and build time:**

Pioneer intends to construct a total of 15.2 miles of middle-mile, fiber optic backhaul link to connect from the RTs to our nearest network node on Route 89 in Limestone. Pioneer uses MFC fiber for much of its network backbone.

The standard offer for broadband speed will be 10M/1M (Tier 5) delivered to each customer using ADSL2+ protocol at \$44.95/month with no installation fee.

It is estimated the installation of the backhaul links and DSLAM can be completed within 18 months of funding depending on weather conditions and when funding is made available. Customer installations can begin immediately once the DSLAM is operational.

**4. Amount of funding requested:**

The current estimated project cost is \$307,881. This amount is subject to change as project details are worked out and will be finalized within the formal application for this project. Pioneer is requesting funding for \$255,381 representing 83% of the estimated project cost.

**5. Applicants financial capability and commitment to match and other funding.**

Pioneer will fund \$52,500, or 17% of the estimated project cost. Appropriate documentation and evidence of funding availability will be provided in the formal application in a form acceptable to the Authority.

**6. Percentage of households to be served and number of households:**

There are an estimated 134 households served in the service area of the RT. The area is mostly residential and has a several farm businesses, and a USCBP office facility. We calculate that the DSLAM can serve all 134 customers, thus providing 100% coverage within the available wire center.

**7. Public-private partnerships and Community Support:**

We are working with the Town of Fort Fairfield in gathering support of this project. Evidence of partnerships and statements of support are being acquired and will be included within the formal application.

**8. Applicants experience relevant to project:**

Pioneer serves in 55 Maine towns from 80 locations, broad casting over 5000 square miles, and serving over 5000 customers via fiberoptic cable, wireless, cable, DSL, dialup.

Pioneer has a proven track record of successful expansion activities and deep commitment to serving rural Maine. Pioneer has been the recipient of past grant funding from the ConnectME Authority as well.

We look forward to formal application availability and working with the Authority to bridge the digital divide for the residents and businesses of this area.

Respectfully submitted,  
Don Flewelling

