



## Electric Coop Fiber Broadband Workshop – Austin, TX February 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>

### Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>

#### **12:30-1:15pm – Business plan: Beyond a feasibility study, building a business plan that works**

A comprehensive, accurate and realistic business plan is the critical first step for any broadband deployment. This session takes a holistic and thorough approach to assessing the co-op's ability to successfully deploy a fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network. We will dive into every aspect of infrastructure, operations and the business model to first determine if broadband makes sense for your co-op, and if so, how to deploy and operate in the most efficient way. This session covers what all a feasibility studies entail and how to present a successful business plan to a cooperative board of directors. Speakers:

#### Speakers:

Kerry Kelton, CEO, Mid South Electric Co-op  
Mel Coleman, CEO, North Arkansas Electric Cooperative  
Keith Hayward, CEO, North East Mississippi EPA  
Tim Davis, CEO, Pemiscot-Dunklin Electric Cooperative  
Patrick Grace, CEO, Oklahoma Electric Cooperative

#### **1:15-2:15pm – 10K Electric Cooperative FTTH Club**

Learn from the five electric coop pioneers that paved the way for rural broadband deployments. They will speak about their journeys from start to present. Each coop has collectively connect more than 50K members/subscribers with high-speed fiber internet in their rural communities.

#### Speakers:

Bob Hance, CEO, Midwest Energy  
Mitchell Johnson, CEO, Ozarks Electric Cooperative  
Aaron Bradshaw, CEO, Co-Mo Connect  
Jim Bagley, CEO, United Electric Cooperative  
Daniel Webster, CEO, Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative Inc

#### **2:15-2:30pm – BREAK**

#### **2:30-3:00pm – Broadband Lending**

This session will include a discussion of the different funding sources for broadband projects including; private grants, loans, government loans. It will also include the loan structures available as well as a discussion of the lending requirements to secure financing.

#### Speakers:

Mark Cook, Broadband Manager, Cumberland Electric Cooperative  
Tim Johnson, CEO, Otsego Electric Cooperative  
Doran Dennis- RVP, Electric Distribution, CoBank

#### **3:00-4:00pm – Funding: More than \$20 BILLION available to electric cooperatives**

The government has been investing in rural telecommunications infrastructure for decades. There are current and future programs (CAF, State, County, RUS and RDOF) offering billions in grants and loans for broadband connectivity and rural communities. In this session, we will discuss how to navigate through the current and future funding opportunities and prepare your application.



*In 2018, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) awarded more than \$186 million in broadband funding to a consortium of electric cooperatives to build out Gigabit-capable networks. It was the largest and most successful bidding consortium in FCC history – one assembled, designed and led by Conexon.*

Speakers:

Jonathan Chambers, Partner, Conexon  
Casey Logan, CEO, Prince George Electric Cooperative  
Tim Smith, CEO, East Central Oklahoma Electric Cooperative  
Aaron Bradshaw, CEO, Como Connect

**4:00-5:00pm – Tax implications of broadband and grants**

Learn more about the 85/15 rule and how it may or may not affect you. This session will dispel some common myths and talk about the results of the tax reform law.

Speakers:

Mitchell Johnson, CEO Ozarks Electric Cooperative  
Jim Bagley, CEO, United Electric Cooperative  
Preston O'Brien, Chief Financial Officer, Oklahoma Electric Cooperative  
Jason Reschly, Partner, Husch Blackwell

**5:00-7:00pm – RECEPTION**

Reception will take place in The Arbor area of the hotel.

**Wednesday, February 19<sup>th</sup>**

**7:00-8:00am – BREAKFAST**

Breakfast will be served in the same room as workshop sessions.

**8:00-10:00am – Broadband Myth Busters** In this session, experts take down some of the most pervasive myths plaguing the industry as it relates to the deployment of broadband networks. Join us as we dive into some of the perceived barriers and objections holding some electric cooperatives back from taking action.

Speakers:

Tim Smith, CEO, East Central Oklahoma Electric Cooperative  
Mitchell Johnson, CEO, Ozarks Electric Cooperative  
Patrick Grace, CEO, Oklahoma Electric Cooperative  
David Girvan, COO, United Electric Cooperative  
David Goodspeed, President of OEC Fiber, Oklahoma Electric Cooperative  
Tim Davis, CEO, Pemiscot Dunklin Electric Cooperative  
Jack Davis, VP/CTO Pemiscot Dunklin Electric Cooperative  
Sean Vanslyke, CEO, SEMO Electric Cooperative  
Mark Cook, Engineering Division, Broadband Manager, Cumberland Electric Cooperative  
Darin Howe, Manager, Market and Technology Development, Corning  
Eric Edwards, Network Architect, CommScope

**10:00-10:15am – BREAK**

**10:15-11:00am – Voice and Regulatory**

Speakers:



Terie Hannay, VP of Telecommunication Services, Conexon  
Dave Allen, VP of Regulatory & Gas, Midwest Energy  
Sean Vanslyke, CEO, SEMO Electric Cooperative

**11:00-11:30am – Smartgrid quantify benefits, specific examples, contributes to the benefits you're getting from the network**

Speakers:

Steve Collier, VP of Business Development, Conexon

**11:30-12:30pm – LUNCH**

**12:30-1:15pm – Network Design: Innovative design strategies for rural fiber deployment**

The challenge of designing a fiber network can be daunting for even the most progressive electric cooperatives. From completing ride-outs, determining infrastructure viability, manually mapping fiber routes to ultimately designing a fiber network and planning for high adoption, the process is often slow, inefficient and expensive. In this session, Industry experts speak on drastically reduce the overall construction cost of building a fiber network with creative design and architecture philosophies.

Speakers:

Mike Byrne, VP of IT, Conexon  
Jack Davis, VP/CTO, Pemiscot Dunklin Electric Cooperative  
Doug Dowling, Director, CommScope

**1:15-2:00pm – Network operations: Best Practices of operating and supporting a fiber network**

Electric cooperatives have unmatched commitment to their members providing accessible, affordable and reliable service. That same commitment holds true with cooperative-built fiber-to-the-home networks. This session covers all areas of operations from choosing equipment vendors, setting up a network and implementing the most efficient back office solutions.

Speakers:

David Girvan, COO, United Electric Cooperative  
Patrick Grace, CEO, Oklahoma Electric Cooperative  
Jack Davis, VP/CTO, Pemiscot Dunklin Electric Cooperative  
Dennis Gilmore, Mid South Electric Co-op  
David Brooks, Calix, Regional Sales Manager

**2:00-2:45pm – Construction management: Managing the complexity of a multi-million dollar construction project**

Building a broadband network is a massive undertaking for an electric cooperative, one with high rewards – enhanced member satisfaction, new business revenue and growth opportunities – and high risk. 80% of the overall deployment cost is outside plant and design technology. Co-op broadband success hinges on the ability to construct and operate a new business from the ground up, without sacrificing service or investments on your electric side. In this session, industry experts speak on their deployment strategies, vendor RFP bidding process for make-ready engineering, make-ready construction, material vendors, and fiber construction to ensure a fair and transparent process.

Speakers:

Tim Smith, East Central Oklahoma Electric Cooperative  
Joe Torres, OSP/Construction Manager, Oklahoma Electric Cooperative  
Jeff Fincannon, VP OSP/ Construction, Conexon



Bo Gresham, Vice President, Ervin Cable Construction

**2:45-3:30pm – Marketing: The often overlooked secret key to success**

One of the critical element of a successful broadband deployment is putting together at marketing plan to roll out the co-op membership, starting day one. This plan should be dynamic in nature and is an area that requires a lot of attention. In this session, we will break down marketing into two components; 1. Brand establishment and recognition, 2. Marketing in a competitive environment. Industry experts will speak on the launch of their broadband subsidiary, the effective marketing strategies they have implemented and how those have evolved as they continue to grow and expand fiber throughout their coop territory. They will dive into strategies they have successfully executed on to increase both member/subscriber retention and ARPU.

Speakers:

David Goodspeed, President of OEC Fiber, Oklahoma Electric Cooperative

Justin Stapleton, Division Manager of Member Services, Mid South Electric Cooperative

Bob Hance, CEO, Midwest Energy

Carl Meyerhoefer, VP of Marketing, Calix

Mark Cook, Engineering Division, Broadband Manager, Cumberland Electric Cooperative

**3:30-4:00pm – General discussion and questions**

**4:00pm – Workshop concludes**

Thank you to all our speakers for taking the time to come to our workshop and speak on their experience deploying fiber! This event would not have been possible without you.

**Thank you to our generous sponsors:**



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