

Reliable Vendors will Contribute to BEAD Success



Jim Kane,
VP of Sales and Product Management, Amphenol Broadband Solutions

Jim Kane is VP of Sales and Product Management at Amphenol Broadband Solutions (ABS). In his 20+ years in the broadband industry, he has held leadership positions in sales and business development.



Bill O'Donnell,
Senior Director of Product Management and Customer Support, Amphenol Broadband Solutions

Bill O'Donnell is Senior Director of Product Management and Customer Support at ABS. In this role, he oversees teams responsible for new products as well as processes that improve customer experiences.

With RDOF builds underway, Congress has sought to address those unserved (under 25 Mbps downstream/3 Mbps upstream) or under-served (less than 100 Mbps downstream/200 Mbps upstream) communities in economically disadvantaged areas across the country. The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, part of The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, provides \$42.5B to be administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The agency will distribute funds to states, which will then provide grants in unserved communities.

As broadband service providers (BSP) navigate the BEAD grant application process which, if successful, will provide 75% of the broadband deployment costs, equipment vendors can be important partners for the success of these projects. They can:

- Bring a variety of complete technical solutions to a BSP
- Provide advice/guidance as to the capabilities of the broadband solutions they offer.
- Have knowledge of the technologies that will make use of these new broadband “pipes” (e.g., IoT applications)
- Have in place partnerships with those firms that can provide a smooth project rollout (e.g., stocking distributors)
- Utilize advanced quoting and ordering tools that provide up-to-date information to BSPs

Variety of Solutions

No two service provision scenarios are ever exactly alike, therefore each new broadband network will depend on many factors. Existing infrastructure, weather/climate and local ordinances are but a few of the dozens of factors that typically dictate the ideal broadband infrastructure for a given deployment. Vendors that can bring complete solutions based on fiber, copper or even wireless will provide the greatest value to the BSP.

A single-vendor solution that runs from the headend or data center all the way into a subscriber's home or business will certainly afford a BSP the greatest simplicity in dealing

with material needs. Of course, this vendor must be able to provide advice/guidance as to the current and future capabilities of the products they offer.

Internet of Things (IoT)

The goal behind BEAD is to bring the economic advantages of broadband connectivity to all communities across the country. The example of a benefit most often cited is the ability for students to reliably connect to the Internet and the plethora of information it offers. Stepping back from this most immediate and obvious benefit however, one may envision the attractiveness of a broadband-connected community for a new or re-located business. Such firms will likely have needs beyond simple connectivity of computers, instead relying on technology to help manage their business. A vendor with knowledge of devices such as sensors, therefore, can provide real benefit to a BSP while planning and deploying their new network.

Partners

Deployments will be most cost-effective and successful when material can be provided where it is needed and at the appropriate time. Manufacturers that have a stocking strategy that utilizes both its own stocking locations and those of dependable distributors will be of the greatest value to BSPs. Additionally, products manufactured onshore in North America provide the greatest reliability for on-time delivery.

Tools

The job of the BSP will be made much easier by a vendor that can offer its planners, engineers, and buyers good, reliable information regarding product availability and pricing. Further, by bundling of products into larger pieces of the overall solution, the amount of effort, and the accompanying paperwork, is greatly reduced. The benefits of vendor-offered online tools and training cannot be overemphasized.

The shared BEAD vision, that of ubiquitous national broadband connectivity, will be fulfilled not only by BSPs but also by quality vendors working beside them to provide solid technology and fulfillment services. The most successful service providers will involve reliable vendors in their up-front network planning process.