



Telecommunications • Community Connect Grant

Broadband Provides Opportunities Inside Rural School

Children across North Dakota are the most important resource for the future. Ensuring they receive an excellent education is critical to their ability to excel as adults. Inside the two-room Sweet Briar School, two teachers utilize broadband to educate students from kindergarten to eighth grade.

A USDA grant to BEK Communications brought fiber to this small school in rural Morton County, and delivered broadband to multiple businesses and 126 homes in the area. Most Sweet Briar students live on ranches or farms, so the ability to access high-speed internet at home can help them with homework and provide their parents access to cutting-edge farm and ranch technology.



One of the two teachers at Sweet Briar utilizes technology available through broadband to educate the variety of age groups in her small classroom

Teachers at Sweet Briar use various online educational software platforms for the students. Prior to broadband, the school used cellular technology to access the web. The service was not as efficient as fiber, and school officials monitored data usage. If they went over their monthly data allowance, they would either be charged a fee, or the students would miss learning opportunities. The school can save money now because they will no longer be charged overage fees.

Broadband can improve students' ability to learn in a number of ways. It can expose them to interactive systems that motivate them to learn and excel in their studies. Each student begins working on a computer at a young age, which introduces them to technology. In a school where each teacher is responsible for four grade levels, it is imperative that students have access to independent learning resources.

Generations of ranching and farming families have passed through Sweet Briar since it opened in 1914. Now, the newest generation follows in their footsteps. Whether their children choose to farm and provide food to the world, or move into another career field, having broadband e-technology in the classroom ensures limitless possibilities.

Obligation Amount: \$2,828,547 grant

Date of Obligation: September 25, 2018

Congressional District: Representative Kelly Armstrong (At-large); Senators John Hoeven and Kevin Cramer

Partners: BEK Communications Cooperative

Demographics: Morton County is a rural county with a population of approximately 30,000

Impact: This grant brought broadband to a school, businesses and 126 homes across rural North Dakota. This provides learning opportunities and the ability to access critical technology at home.