

#9...Mar 13, 2020

Hi to the 283 recipients of this newsletter.

You may already know that the USDA grant program has pushed forward their proposal deadline from mid March to the end of March. GWI tells us that this essentially has a “neutral” impact on the fund request they are submitting on our behalf. It just makes it easier to make the deadline.

Many thanks to all 40-plus businesses who submitted pre-subscription forms! We were able to supply everything GWI needs in that category. Other evaluation criteria are out of our hands - USDA is looking at “rurality” (extra points for a low population density), number of farms (it is, after all, USDA) and several other criteria that don’t apply to us. We really needed those business forms to score points! So thank you again.

Ben Freedman happened to be in Washington DC last week and met with the Congressional delegation. He gave them an earful about our broadband situation. Way to go, Ben!

There are bills in the Maine legislature to provide funding for broadband. Yesterday I submitted testimony as a member of the Brooksville Broadband Committee, a copy of which is attached.(1) One of our long time summer residents, Andrew Butcher of the Maine Broadband Coalition and the Portland Council of Governments, also submitted testimony. He fully understands our situation - his camp uses Hughes Net.

In response to a request from Jonathan Hall, chairman of the Brooksville Comp Planning committee, I wrote a section about broadband, which will be edited into the draft comp plan. A copy of that is also attached.(2)

This morning, the Portland Press Herald had this comment in an op-ed column about the coronavirus and the effect that “social distancing” will have on old people: *“We’ve got a lot of older frail people in parts of the state that aren’t connected online via high-speed internet,” Parham noted, adding that local daily and weekly newspapers may be their only contact with what’s happening beyond their dooryard.”* As you will read in my testimony to the legislature, Brooksville is the oldest town in the second oldest county in the oldest state in the country. And while we may not be all that “frail”, we are certainly not adequately connected! (Yet) Carry on, stay safe

(the referenced attachments are contained elsewhere on this website:

(1) “Dear Legislators” March 12, 2020 is (where?)

(2) Broadband Report to the Comp Plan committee, March 11 2020 is (where?)