



Antrim County Economic Development Corporation



Mission Statement: Retain, expand, and promote County-wide economic growth and stability

MEMBERS

Sherry Comben
12/31/2026

Peter Garwood
12/31/2025

Leslie Elrod
12/31/2026

Cherie Hogan
12/31/2027

Rachel Krino
12/31/2027

Dawn LaVanway
Annual Appointment

Kathleen Peterson
12/31/2026

Bonnie Robbins
12/31/2028

Tim Timmer
12/31/2028

STAFF

Jeremy Scott
County Administrator

Janet Koch
Deputy Administrator

Tina Schrader
Administrative Asst.

Margie Boyd
Secretary

OFFICE ADDRESS

P.O. Box 187
Bellaire, MI 49615

PHONE: 231-533-6265

FAX: 231-533-8111

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

If you wish to attend a meeting and require special assistance, please contact the Administration Office.

The Antrim County Economic Development Corporation meeting is scheduled for
Tuesday, February 21, 2023
Antrim County Building,
Board of Commissioners Room
203 East Cayuga Street, Bellaire, Michigan

AGENDA ITEMS INCLUDE:

9:00 a.m. Call to Order
Public Comment
Approval of Minutes – [January 17, 2023](#)
Discussion: Social Media Presence
Letter of Support – ROBIN Grant: Peninsula Fiber Network, True Stream
Discussion: Business Connector Series
Discussion: Strategic Planning
Various Matters as Appropriate
• MI Chamber Membership
Public/Member Comment
Adjourn

If you have any questions, concerns, please contact the Administration and Planning Office at 231-533-6265.
We appreciate your cooperation in this matter. Thank you



Memorandum Administration Office

February 21, 2023

TO: Antrim County Economic Development Corporation

FR: Administration Office

RE: Approval of Minutes (1/17)

You received the [minutes from the January 17, 2023](#) Economic Development Corporation meeting via electronic communication on February 16, 2023. If there are no corrections to those minutes, please consider the following action:

Motion to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2023 meeting as presented.



Antrim County

Administration Office

DATE: February 21, 2023

FR: Janet Koch, Deputy Administrator

RE: Realizing Opportunities with Broadband Infrastructure Networks (ROBIN) Grant

Broadband has been a priority Antrim County project for years now. Thankfully, we have been able to build communication with other counties, local partners, and businesses to stay on top of opportunities. Peninsula Fiber Network (PFN) came to us last fall with a middle-mile broadband project that they were hoping to fund with a National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) grant. This project aligns extremely well with locations that we have identified over the years as needing broadband infrastructure. As a backup to the NTIA grant they have already applied for, PFN is now applying for the Realizing Opportunities with Broadband Infrastructure Networks (ROBIN) grant and has requested a letter of support.

Additionally, Trustream is in the process of applying for a ROBIN grant for last-mile connectivity in the southern part of the County, an area that had thus far not been scheduled for installation. ROBIN is a state grant offering a total of \$238.7M, broken up between middle mile (up to 35%) and last mile. As such, these two applications are somewhat complimentary to each other and both projects will go a long way toward making broadband to businesses and residents a reality throughout Antrim County.

There is no commitment of funding from the County for this grant. PFN and Trustream would be the direct recipients. They are only asking for a letter of support. We have also taken the opportunity to connect both organizations with other stakeholders and provided draft letters of support to local units.

The draft letters of support are attached and if the EDC is supportive of this, please consider the following motion:

To authorize the Economic Development Corporation President to sign letters of support for Peninsula Fiber Network (PFN) and Trustream for their grant application to the ROBIN grant as presented.

Realizing Opportunities with Broadband Infrastructure Networks (ROBIN)

Program Fact Sheet

In early 2022, Governor Whitmer and the Michigan Legislature passed the [Building Michigan Together Plan](#). The plan includes \$250.6 million to expand high-speed internet service to unserved locations in the state. On October 7, 2022, the [United States Treasury announced](#) the approval of Michigan's plan for the use of these funds. The following provides an overview of the ROBIN Program.

- + ROBIN will be administered by the [Michigan High-Speed Internet Office \(MIHI\)](#) located within the Prosperity Division of the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity.
- + The funding for ROBIN comes from the [Capital Projects Fund \(CPF\)](#) which is managed by the United States Treasury. The CPF was part of the American Rescue Plan Act that passed in 2021.
- + \$238.7M will be available through ROBIN for internet expansion to unserved locations. The remaining balance of funds (5% of the total award) will be used for program administration.
- + Unserved locations are homes, businesses, and institutions without internet service available at a speed of at least 100/20 Mbps from at least one internet service provider.
- + Up to 35% of ROBIN funds can be used for middle-mile projects that support deployment of broadband service to unserved areas. The remainder is dedicated for last-mile service projects.
- + Broadband service built with ROBIN funds must deliver a symmetrical end-user internet connection of at least 100 Mbps upstream and downstream unless significant topographic, geographic, or financial impracticability exists in the project area.
- + Eligible applicants for ROBIN include internet service providers, those licensed under the MI Telecommunications Act, franchise holders under the Uniform Video Services Local Franchise Act, or any entity currently providing broadband service in the state.
- + Governmental entities may apply for grants only as a public-private partnership with an internet service provider. Public-private partnerships must demonstrate a competitive bidding process and comply with applicable state laws.
- + Final grant criteria are still being developed by MIHI, but will include, at a minimum: the applicant's experience and financial wherewithal, readiness to build, operate, and maintain the project, long-term project viability, network scalability, and demonstrated community support.
- + All ROBIN grantees must participate in the [FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program](#).
- + MIHI anticipates opening the 60-day ROBIN grant application window in January 2023.
- + All program funds must be expended by the end of the 2026 calendar year.
- + Interested applicants should refer to the [US Treasury Guidance for the Capital Projects Fund](#) as well as the [boilerplate legislation \(Sec. 359\)](#) appropriating the CPF funds to the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity for more information.

Please direct any questions to the MIHI Office at: LEO-MIHighSpeedInternet@michigan.gov

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

OF THE COUNTY OF ANTRIM

February 21, 2023

Mr. Scott Randall, General Manager
Peninsula Fiber Network, LLC
1901 West Ridge Street, Suite 2
Marquette, MI 48955

Re: Letter of Support for ROBIN grant application

Dear Mr. Randall,

The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) of the County of Antrim is pleased to support Peninsula Fiber Network's (PFN) application to the ROBIN (Realizing Opportunity with Broadband Infrastructure Networks) Grant Program.

The EDC believes that the lack of access to broadband telecommunications is a barrier to development opportunities that could create growth across our rural county. We believe that high-speed fiber internet connectivity promotes economic development, improves the quality of life for our residents, encourages the creation of much-needed housing, and boosts the development of additional infrastructure.

PFN's middle mile project will create a fiber backbone in the central and southeast regions of Antrim County, much of which lacks 25/3 service. The proposal will also create connectivity options for underserved areas in that same region. We are gratified that PFN is partnering with local providers to serve homes and businesses lacking broadband.

The EDC's current strategic plan notes "Continue educating the community on broadband services" as an action item, and we would be pleased to collaborate with PFN regarding digital literacy efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this application.

Sincerely,

Rachel Krino, President
Economic Development Corporation of the County of Antrim

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF THE COUNTY OF ANTRIM

February 21, 2023

Mr. Jason Guthaus, Infrastructure Program Manager
Michigan High-Speed Internet Office, Dept. of Labor & Economic Opportunity
105 W. Allegan St.
Lansing, MI 48933

Re: Letter of Support for ROBIN grant application

Dear Mr. Randall,

The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) of the County of Antrim is pleased to support Great Lakes Energy Truestream's application to the ROBIN (Realizing Opportunity with Broadband Infrastructure Networks) Grant Program.

The EDC believes that the lack of access to broadband telecommunications is a barrier to development opportunities that could create growth across our rural county. We believe that high-speed fiber internet connectivity promotes economic development, improves the quality of life for our residents, encourages the creation of much-needed housing, and boosts the development of additional infrastructure.

Truestream's proposed last mile network would provide much-needed service to the southern and central parts of Antrim County, much of which lacks 25/3 service. The proposal would also create connectivity options for underserved areas in that same area. This would reduce one of most stubborn barriers to economic growth that Michigan's rural areas are currently facing; the lack of true broadband service.

The EDC's current strategic plan notes "Continue educating the community on broadband services" as an action item, and we would be pleased to collaborate with Truestream regarding digital literacy efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this application.

Sincerely,

Rachel Krino, President
Economic Development Corporation of the County of Antrim

e-cc: Great Lakes Energy Truestream

2022 EDC Strategic Plan

| High Priority | Actions | Status |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Community Support</i> | Provide rack cards to MDOT, NLEA, area chambers of commerce, and local units of government, both hard copy and electronic | Ongoing |
| Business Connector Series | Investigate and become knowledgeable about services offered by each economic development related service organization from whom Antrim County can receive services. | Ongoing in 2023 To begin in 2022 |
| Business Connector Series | Help entrepreneurs, local businesses, and local units of government in Antrim County connect with potential/appropriate service providers. | Ongoing in 2023 To begin in 2022 |
| | Regularly send links regarding grant information and other funding sources to local units | Ongoing |
| <i>Promotion & Collaboration</i> | | |
| | Maintain relationships with local office of the USDA Office of Rural Development, Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, and Networks Northwest, as well as create new relationships with other County EDC's and community groups as appropriate. | Ongoing |
| | Create and maintain relationships with housing organizations in an effort to keep local units informed of various opportunities in training, townhalls, and other information sessions and keep local units informed of these opportunities. | Ongoing in 2023 To begin in 2022 |
| Distribution ongoing in 2023 | Work with Antrim County Road Commission on the update and distribution of the County Road Map | Printing expected in 2022 |
| Business Connector Series | Invite local units and area chambers of commerce to hear more from outside agencies regarding what services they provide | Ongoing in 2023 Begin in 2022 |
| <i>Affordable Housing</i> | Educate the community on the need, funding availability, infrastructure availability, and the benefits of affordable housing | Ongoing |

2022 EDC Strategic Plan

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| <i>Broadband</i> | Continue educating the community on broadband services | Ongoing |
| Medium Priority | Actions | Status |
| <i>Finances</i> | Prepare the EDC budget for 2023 | To do in 2022 |
| | Identify and pursue additional funding sources outside of County | Ongoing |
| | Research capacity and opportunity for medium-sized (\$5,000 - \$10,000) revolving loan programs for small businesses. | Begin in 2022 |
| | Investigate the possibility of a centralized grant writing program driven by the Antrim County EDC | Begin in 2022 |
| <i>County Master Plan</i> | Review updates and make any recommendations to the Antrim County Planning Commission. | To do in 2022 |
| Low Priority | Actions | Status |