AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

Agenda Item: Correspondence; Colorado Department of Local Affai

Action Requested: Board of County Commissioners' Signature

Parties to the Agreement: BoCC Letter to DOLA regarding McClure Pass comm site

Term Begins: **Term Ends:** **Grant Contract #:**

Summary:

Letter of intent to DOLA regarding Gunnison County applying for Administrative Grant funds for completing the EIS at the McClure Pass Comm Site

Fiscal Impact: None at this time. Actual grant will require match, which Pitkin County has agreed to cover.

Submitted by: Scott Morrill **Submitter's Email Address:** smorrill@gunnisoncounty.org

Finance Review: (●) Required ( ) Not Required

Comments:
No concerns

Reviewed by: GUNCOUNTY1\lNienhueser Discharge Date: 12/17/2015

County Attorney Review: (●) Required ( ) Not Required

Comments:
ok - gs

Reveiwed by: GUNCOUNTY1\gstuhr Discharge Date: 12/18/2015 Certificate of Insurance Required Yes ( ) No (●)

County Manager Review:

Comments:

Reveiwed by: GUNCOUNTY1\mbirnie Discharge Date: 12/18/2015

(●) Consent Agenda ( ) Regular Agenda ( ) Worksession Time Allotted:

Agenda Date: 12/22/2015

Revised April 2015

December 22, 2015

Colorado Department of Local Affairs
Elyse Ackerman
222 S. 6th St., Rm. 409
Grand Junction, CO 81501

Dear Ms. Ackerman-Casselberry,

Gunnison County, in collaboration with Pitkin County, Garfield County, Delta County, Holy Cross Energy, the US Forest Service and the State of Colorado, is planning to develop a new enhanced public safety communications site on McClure Pass just off of Colorado Highway 133. Currently, the area between Marble and Somerset on Highway 133 has no cell service and virtually no radio coverage. The lack of radio and cell coverage diminishes the ability to communicate and endangers the public as well as first responders.

The existing site, which is located in Gunnison County, is leased from the United States Forest Service by Gunnison County. The equipment currently in use is a low-power VHF repeater that operates on solar power only (no grid power). This repeater provides very limited coverage, and due to being solar powered, is susceptible to failure with heavy use, and on cloudy days.

One of the primary goals of the project is to establish grid power at the new site. This will require power lines to be run from the bottom of the east side of McClure Pass to the new site, approximately 1.7 miles. Holy Cross Energy, one of the stakeholders in this project, has provided a scope of work for getting grid power to the site. Having consulted with the United States Forest Service and Scenic Byways, the decision has been made that a portion of the route will be underground to reduce the visual impact from Highway 133. The balance of the route will be overhead lines, attached to poles.

The USFS is requiring an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the new site and proposed power line route prior to any work beginning. It is estimated that the cost of the EIS will be approximately $100,000. Projected cost of the entire project, including the EIS, is approximately $1,125,000.

The counties and other stakeholders involved in this project are collaborating at every level; planning, design, construction and financing. Gunnison, Delta and Garfield Counties have extensive energy and mineral exploration activities taking place, which adds to the call load for emergency services, especially in this area. Continuing impacts of the economic downturn and the slump in fuel prices have negatively impacted participating entities ability to cover all costs of this project. Gunnison County has been particularly hard hit by the closure of the West Elk Coal Mine.

We are seeking matching funds from DOLA, through the Administrative Grant, to provide financial assistance in completing the EIS and lowering costs to participating stakeholders. Completion of the EIS will enable stakeholders to move forward with the project, which will provide vital communications to the region.

The projected timeline for completing the EIS is by the end of 2016. The target date for completion of the entire project is fall of 2017.

Sincerely,

Paula Swenson, Chairperson	Phil Chamberland, Commissioner	Jonathan Houck, Commissioner