Orbitel - Arizona City ABDG Narrative

Orbitel Communications is a broadband company based in Arizona spanning from the southern Phoenix metro area to the northern Tucson metro area. It provides high speed data, video, and phone services to the communities of Maricopa, Sun Lakes, SunBird, Robson Ranch, SaddleBrooke, and SaddleBrooke Ranch. Founded in 2004, the company currently has 407 miles of plant in its service areas (strand and trench footage). The operation employs approximately 30 team members with an average tenure of 7.6 years and leverages contractor resources in areas of new build and installation based on the volume of activity.

Orbitel is a part of the Schurz Communications, Inc. broadband group. Founded in 1872, SCI has a long history of dedication to its customers and communities. Family owned; Schurz is in its fifth generation of leadership. Though Orbitel is a local Arizona operator, it has the power of five other broadband systems with sister properties based in Maryland, Iowa, Minnesota, Vermont, and Ohio serving over 117,000 members across the country. Schurz also owns a cloud-based solutions and storage company.

Orbitel understands the broadband divide. When Orbitel was purchased by SCI in 2012, the highest Internet speed offered was 20Mbps with no Wi-Fi option. This was in stark contrast to other operators in that era. Today, Orbitel is building fiber-to-the-home in all new construction areas with 1G service and will roll out 1G, DOCSIS 3.1 service to all legacy areas. Plans to increase speeds will continue.

Arizona City is on the wrong side of the broadband divide today. No broadband provider operates in this. Century Link does have service in some of Hidden Valley with DSL speeds typically 40Mbps or less. Worse, there was a broadband provider for Arizona City, but it was shut down in 2009 by the FBI for illegal satellite video distribution. No other provider has entered the area. With the pandemic forcing more people to work, learn and utilize entertainment from home. In addition, more devices and equipment can connect to the Internet of Things, from phones to fridges. To truly be an effective household of today, fast Internet speeds with Wi-Fi capabilities are needed. Orbitel wants to bring today's technology to Hidden Valley, AZ.

Arizona City, AZ is estimated by Pinal County to have about 700 homes with 10,300 residents. Complimenting the residential area are several first responder stations, County and city buildings, businesses, churches, and recreational facilities.

Orbitel will utilize approximately 76 miles of plant to provide service for the residents of hidden Valley. Excluding several permits including ADOT ROW and Union Pacific Railroad, Orbitel will build to Arizona City from its Robson Ranch location, about a 10-mile build. Once Arizona City is reached, Orbitel will add over 50 miles of plant to connect residents and reach 1G Internet speeds. The overall estimated cost of this project [redacted]. Thanks to the state of Arizona wanting to bridge the technological divide, Orbitel is asking for Arizona Broadband Development Grant

(Rural) funding of [redacted]. Orbitel will match [redacted].
Census tracks for this area are AZ0210021011, AZ0210021012, AZ0210021013, AZ0210021014, AZ0210021021 and AZ0210021031.

Accompanying documents for the project costs, timeline, personnel, and information is attached. Please direct any questions to:

John D. Schurz
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Orbitel Communications
[redacted]