



Bridging Nebraska's Digital Divide

How It's Done: Public-Private Partnerships



Bridging Nebraska's Digital Divide

How It's Done: Public-Private Partnerships

Kyle Arganbright
City of Valentine



Bridging Nebraska's Digital Divide

How It's Done: Public-Private Partnerships

Nate Wyatt and Tom Shoemaker
City of Gothenburg and Pinpoint



Bridging Nebraska's Digital Divide

How It's Done: Public-Private Partnerships

Pat Pope and David Webb
Nebraska Public Power District

Improving Nebraska's Rural Broadband Thru Public / Private Partnerships

MARCH 2022



Nebraska Public Power District

Always there when you need us

Why Should the Public Sector Get Involved?

- **Broadband is vital for rural Nebraska**
 - Connectivity for utility & governmental operations
 - Precision agriculture
 - Business growth
 - Education
 - Medical services
 - Keeping rural Nebraska's best and brightest youth in rural Nebraska
- **Very similar to economic development – a role public entities have played for many years**

How Do We Get There?

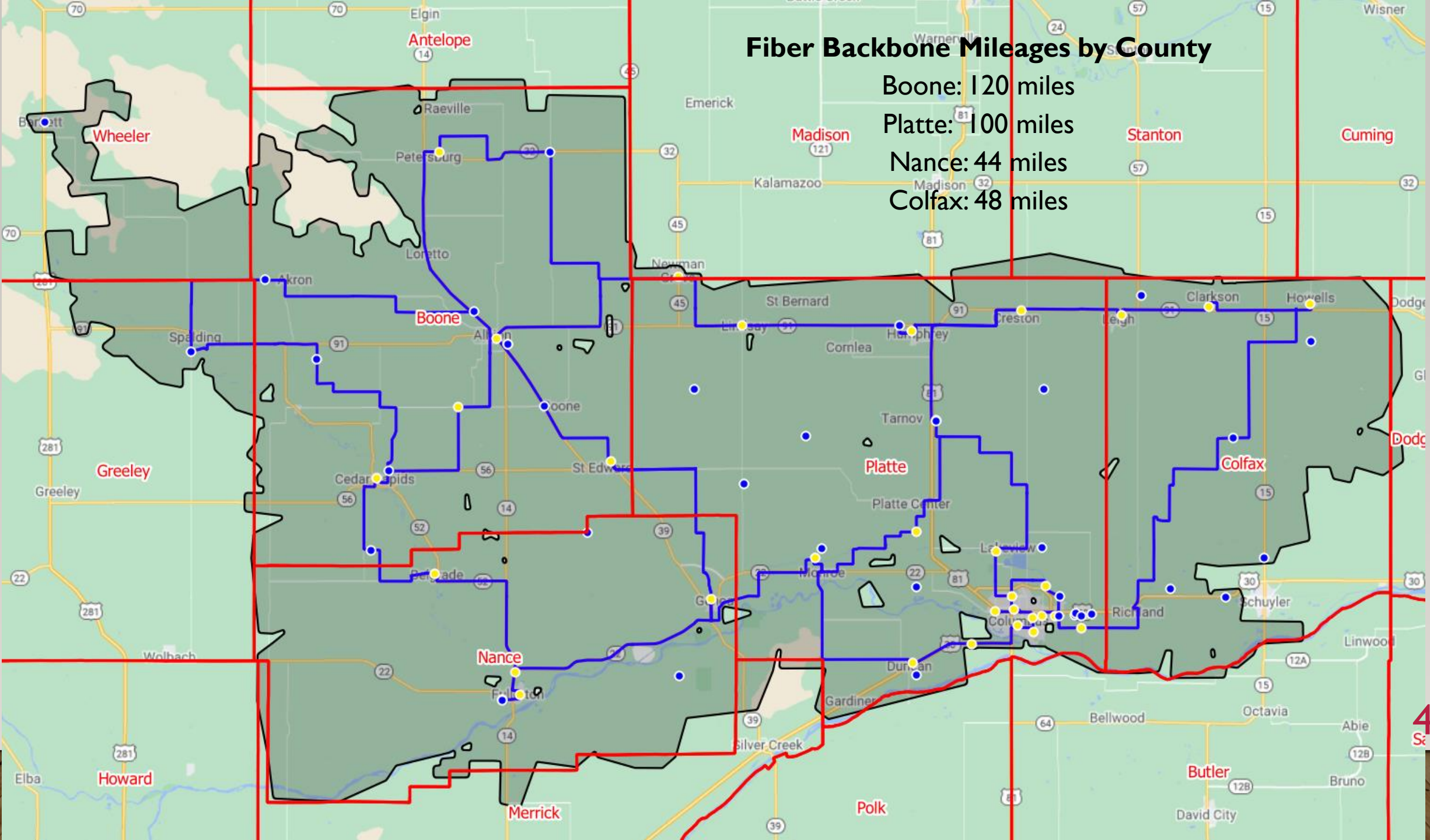
1. Design a network to specifically serve the needs of rural Nebraska, its residents and public partners
2. Pursue federal & state funding opportunities to help finance the construction of the network
3. Identify private partners to undertake the actual operation of the network and sale of broadband service

Who Can Design a Network?

- NRTC - Founded in 1986 by electric cooperatives, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), and the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC)
- Serves more than 1,500 rural utilities and affiliates in 48 states

Fiber Backbone Mileages by County

- Boone: 120 miles
- Platte: 100 miles
- Nance: 44 miles
- Colfax: 48 miles



What About Funding?

- State of Nebraska LB388 funding - \$20M/year for 2021 and 2022
- USDA ReConnect Program - \$1B for rural broadband, applications due 2/22/22
- Federal infrastructure bill - \$65B for rural broadband and 5G connectivity, details TBD
- Many other programs – developing a strategic plan to evaluate

Memorandum of Understanding

- Currently used between public power districts and counties
- Determination what the structure for ownership, construction & operation/maintenance could look like
- Collaboration to secure funding
- Seeking out and evaluating potential Private Providers

- **South Central PPD/Glenwood Telecommunications**
 - LB388 (Nebraska Broadband Bridge Act) grant application submitted - **DENIED**
 - South Central participating in NRTC study to quantify the value of a broadband backbone to their electric customers
- **Loup PPD, Platte, Boone, Colfax & Nance Counties**
 - Formally entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – funding and private partner search
- **Seven Siblings** (York County, Perennial PPD, NPPD, Polk County, Polk County RPPD, City of Stromsburg, Butler County RPPD)
 - Evaluating results of rural broadband feasibility study
- **Norris PPD, Gage, Jefferson, Saline, Seward, Thayer Counties**
 - Evaluating MOU/feasibility study options

QUESTIONS?
