

March 10, 2010

Mr. Eric Schmidt  
Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer  
Google Inc.  
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway  
Mountain View, CA 94043

Dear Mr. Schmidt:

I am writing in support of Think BIG Farmington's proposal to become a test site for the Google Fiber for Communities project. This letter follows the nomination for Farmington, New Mexico that I submitted through Google's website.

Although Google will receive applications from across the country, I believe Farmington is a perfect place for a trial fiber optic network. Think BIG Farmington's application is a community-wide effort that that would include towns and rural areas of San Juan county and part of the Navajo Nation in northwestern New Mexico. In earlier eras, networks that connected the country with transcontinental railroads, interstate highways, and international airports all bypassed the Four Corners region.

When President Clinton visited northwest New Mexico in 2000, he was introduced by a bright Navajo girl who had won a computer. Yet she could not connect her new computer to the Internet. In fact, her family could not even get a telephone line to their home. The Navajo Nation still has some of the lowest telephone and Internet access in the country. The ultra high speed communications network proposed by Think BIG Farmington would help ensure that northwest New Mexico is finally connected.

A gigabit speed Internet network would create new possibilities for economic growth, distance learning, and telemedicine. Exciting Internet services already exist in each of these areas. I believe deploying a trial fiber optic network in northwest New Mexico would lead to even more creative applications, services, and innovations that could be shared elsewhere.

Farmington owns its electric utility and already has dark fiber and other infrastructure that could be used to support the Google Fiber for Communities project. Given these assets and broad community support for proposal, I think Google would find Think BIG Farmington an excellent partner in exploring new ways to help make Internet access better, and faster for everyone.

Finally, I want to commend Google for its “Think Big with a Gig” initiative. The United States once led the world in Internet penetration but now ranks fifteenth among developed countries. As a nation, we must do more to ensure that high speed Internet access is available for all.

Thank you for your full consideration of Think BIG Farmington’s proposal.

Sincerely,

Tom Udall  
United States Senator