

To the Editor December 22, 2020

Rural Broadband

This letter is in response to the recent HTR story titled Rural Areas Are Struggling, which identifies that nearly half of those living in our rural areas lack access to Broadband Internet.

Earlier this month I sent the following message with a single simple question to our Madison government leaders Sen.Bewley@legis.wisconsin.gov and Rep.Hintz@legis.wisconsin.gov. I have received no response(s).

Why is it that Wisconsin did not qualify for this money?

SpaceX Gets \$886 Million From FCC To Subsidize Starlink In 35 States (arstechnica.com)

SpaceX has been awarded \$885.51 million by the Federal Communications Commission to provide Starlink broadband to 642,925 rural homes and businesses in 35 states. The 35 states where SpaceX won FCC funding are Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

A phone conversation with local Rep. Shea Sortwell caught him unaware of this, despite purportedly being a strong supporter of rural broadband. He did not have an answer to my question but his first instinct was to pass the buck to our Federal representatives.

I suspect that for a state legislature that has worked the least number of days in the entire country in the past ten months, that the answer might just be embarrassing.