

**Yampa Valley Electric Association
Operation Roundup Grant Application
Routt County Fairgrounds Project Narrative**

The overall purpose of the Routt County Fairgrounds is to provide an outdoor community gathering space that is home to a variety of events. One of the major goals of the Fairgrounds is to expand the opportunities and amenities offered, in an effort to better serve the local community and tourists that visit the fairgrounds. One of the ways that the overall fairgrounds experience can be imminently improved is by upgrading the wireless capabilities available at this essential Routt County landmark. The expansion of WIFI to include the entire fairgrounds would be instrumental to the fairgrounds experience not just for the annual fair, but all other events and activities hosted by the Fairgrounds.

Currently, WIFI is only available in the exhibit hall which only provides service to office staff. Even so, the WIFI that is currently in service is subject to outages and slow speeds, so it is not without challenges. Additional WIFI is sourced during the annual fair, however, it is still limited to services exclusive to the exhibit hall, which provides services to roughly 100 people.

With the addition of Luminate, that number would jump to over 1000 people during the annual fair alone, with year-round access for all other users and events, eliminating the need to purchase additional wireless service during the peak usage that takes place during the fair.

The fairgrounds are considered an emergency location for all of Routt County, including for the Yampa Valley Regional Airport and Routt County Emergency Services. As an emergency location site, it is imperative for the Fairgrounds to offer strong connections to broadband services with rapid streaming capabilities. Without this service, utilization of the Fairgrounds as an emergency service location is less effective. The addition of better WIFI will allow emergency personnel such as firefighters to have quick and easy access to the internet, which will ultimately aid in any emergency directives performed by personnel while at the Fairgrounds. Historically, wildland firefighting crews have utilized the fairgrounds as a staging and coordination zone and will continue to utilize the space in the same capacity as future situations arise. The fairgrounds are a proven resource to these crews with camping space, showers, restrooms, and access to water. Wireless access across the fairgrounds will be an added benefit to crews utilizing the site for incident command operations or emergency response.

Additionally, the ability to have fairgrounds-wide wireless access will also provide the 4-H kids the ability to market their animals for sale during the annual fair and provide RV customers camping in the fairgrounds RV park internet access during their stay. The improved wireless capabilities will provide Routt County staff with more consistent and efficient internet access without the worry of outages or periods of reduced speed.

The money requested would be utilized to directly fund the addition of Luminat at the Routt County Fairgrounds. This is a one-time request of \$14,000 for the initial installation of Luminat at the Fairgrounds (see service quote from Luminat). The ongoing monthly service charges for the term of the contract will be covered by the Routt County Fairgrounds.

If this project is not funded, the addition of WIFI will be delayed until other funding can be secured. Internet services cannot be improved without financial assistance for this project. There is no other organization in Routt County that provides similar services to what the fairgrounds offer. The Routt County Fairgrounds is an asset to the community that can be improved through broadband service.

The expansion of wireless internet at the fairgrounds will have a positive impact on the environment in that it will prevent participants, judges, and other users and patrons from needing to drive off-site for meetings that require strong internet connections. This will reduce the carbon footprint of fairgrounds patrons by eliminating the need to commute elsewhere for wireless service and alternate meeting spaces.

This project is civically engaging in that the outcome will improve the Fairgrounds experience year-round, for all user types. The addition of broadband will increase the capabilities of the Fairgrounds and the potential community events that can be hosted, expanding the user base in the process. As a designated site for emergency services, this project is safety conscious and the addition of wireless access across the Fairgrounds campus would inevitably be a valuable resource for emergency management situations. The addition of wireless internet to the Routt County Fairgrounds ensures that this vital community asset can continue to thrive while also broadening the options for hosted events (rodeos, concerts, craft fairs, job training, etc.), inviting additional community participation and involvement. The addition of WIFI at the fairgrounds signifies the first of many improvements that will allow for a better experience and pave the way for expanded opportunities that will positively impact all patrons.