



North Dakota
Public Service Commission

Informal Hearing PU-25-285 & PU-25-286

February 18th, 2026

14 PU-25-285 Filed 02/18/2026 Pages: 14
Informal Hearing Presentation

BEK Communications Cooperative

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Informal Hearing Presentation

BEK Communications Cooperative

About BEK Communications Cooperative



BEK Communications Cooperative:

- 74-Year-old Cooperative based in Steele, North Dakota

Infrastructure Investment:

- \$266,000,000

Annual Contribution to Local economy:

- \$23,000,000

Current Employee Count:

- 96 Employees

Gigabit Communities:

- 10 Gbps service available in 56 communities across North Dakota

Service Locations



Steele



Bismarck



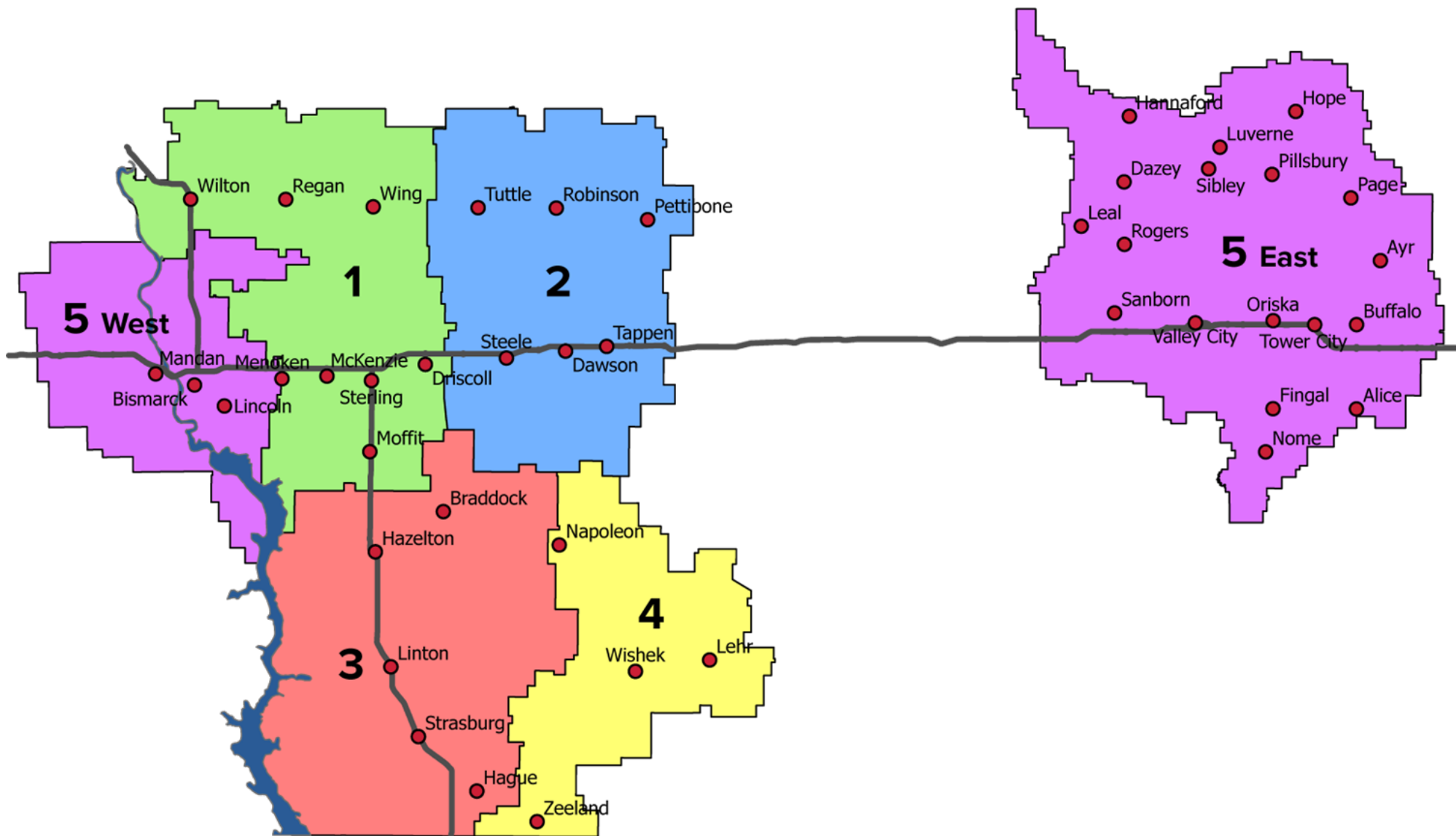
Valley City



Today's Presenter:

- Derrick Bulawa, CEO/General Manager

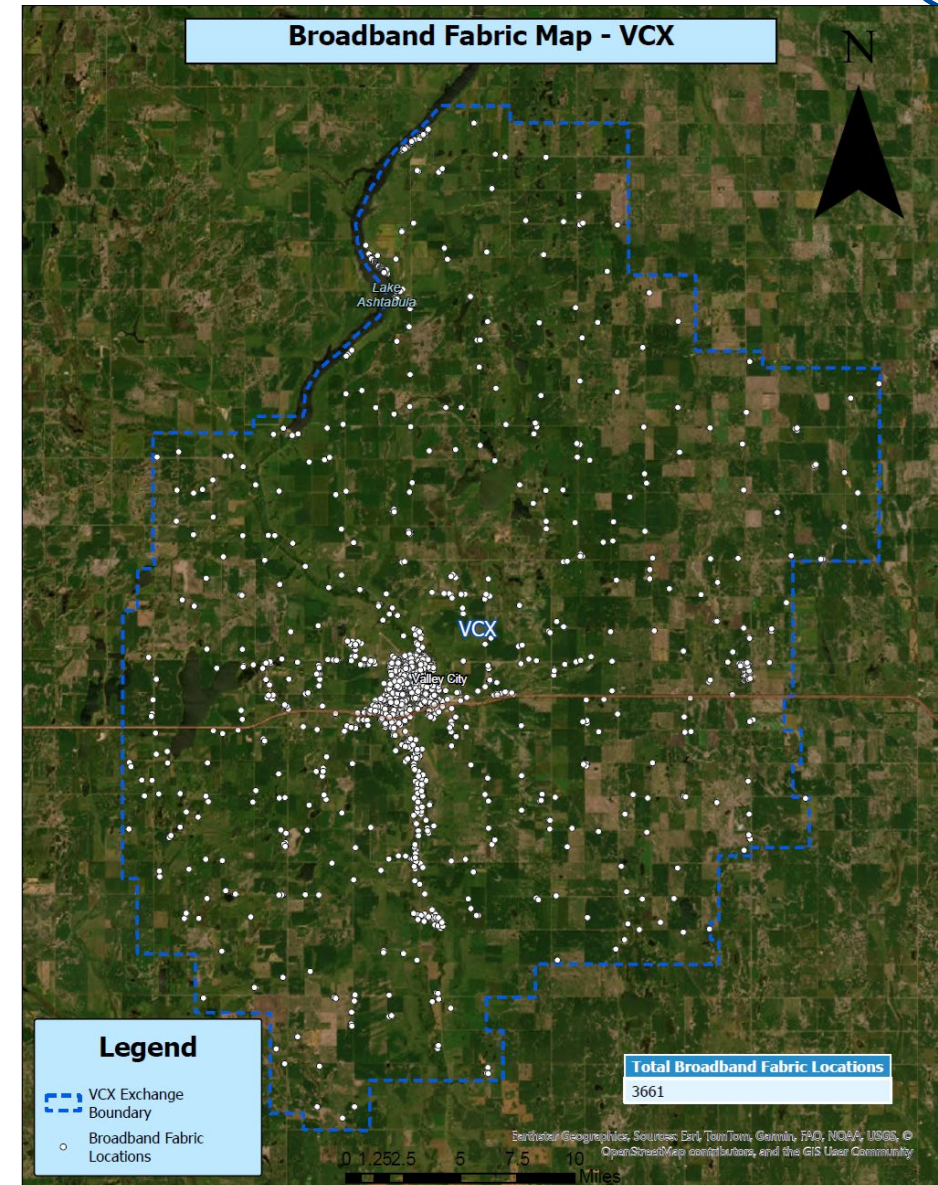
BEK Service Map & Voting Districts



BEK Service in the Valley City Exchange



- BEK has served the Valley City Exchange for over 11 years (since February 2015)
- BEK Fiber Service is available at 100% of the locations
- 3,661 locations certified by the NTIA
- 10 Gbps fiber internet service available
- Voice Telephone service available to 100% of locations
- Notable Customers:
 - Valley City State University
 - Barnes County PSAP
 - Cell Towers
 - Hospital
 - Valley City School District
 - Most businesses
 - Most Residences
- Buildout achieved using:
 - 2 USDA Community Connect Grants – in rural
 - Rural Digital Opportunity Funds (RDOF) – in rural
 - BEK Communications Cooperative Cash – in Valley City



Valley City Local Service



Customer Experience

- Customer Service office in Valley City
 - 24/7 technical support via call center
 - After hours field tech. dispatch available
 - Online Chat Service
 - Email Service
 - Walk-in Service



**Valley City
Customer Service Center**

Plant operations in Valley City

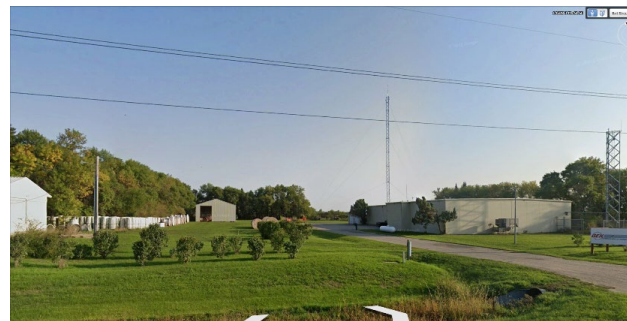
- Field technicians
- Plant Engineering



**Valley City
Plant Operations**

Enterprise Engineering in Valley City

- Engineering personnel



**Wheatland
Plant Operations Center**

BEK Community Engagement



Valley City State University
New Student Day



BEK Awards Community Grants



Customer Service Day
At BEK

Service in the Valley City Exchange

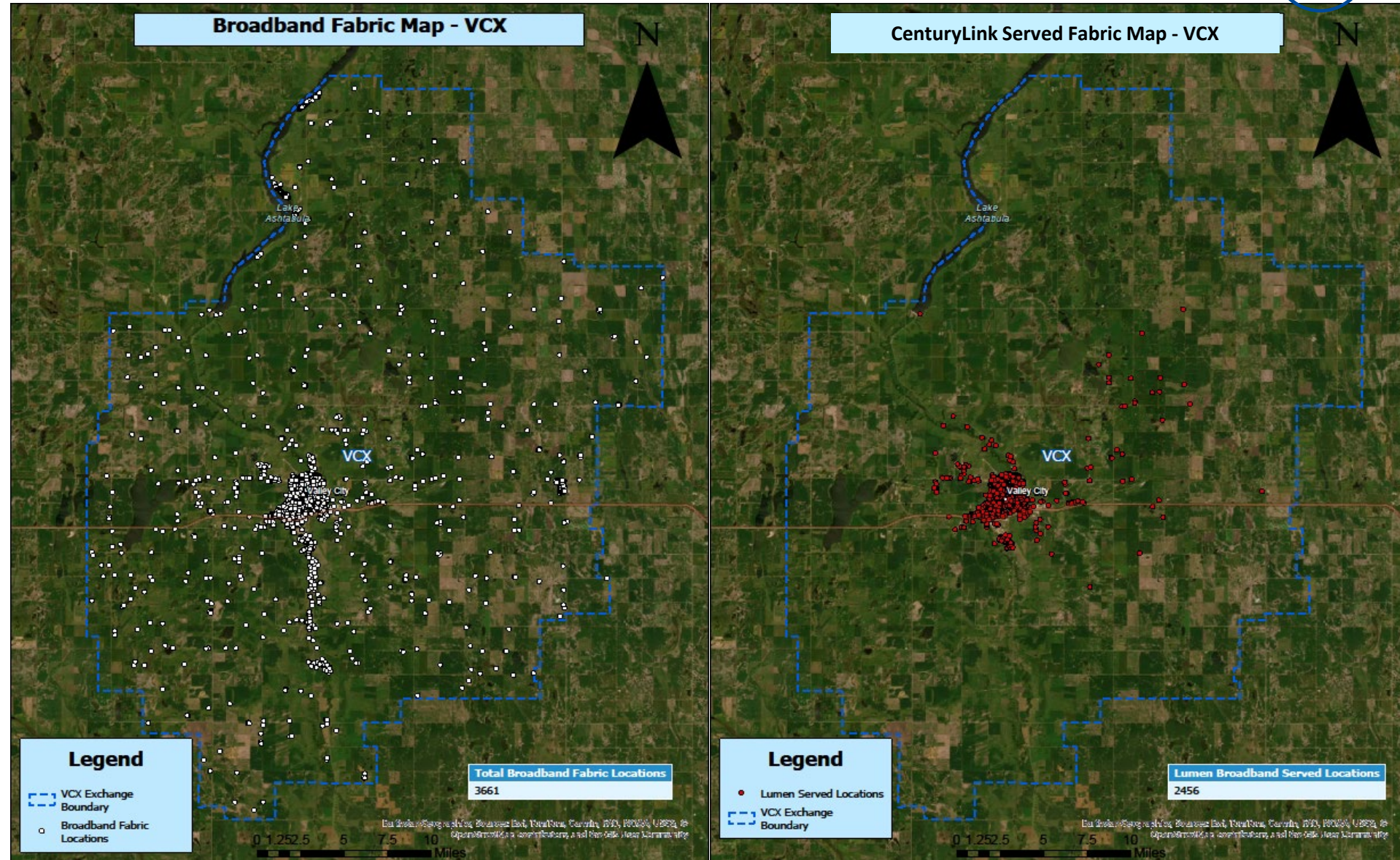


CenturyLink's FCC Filing:

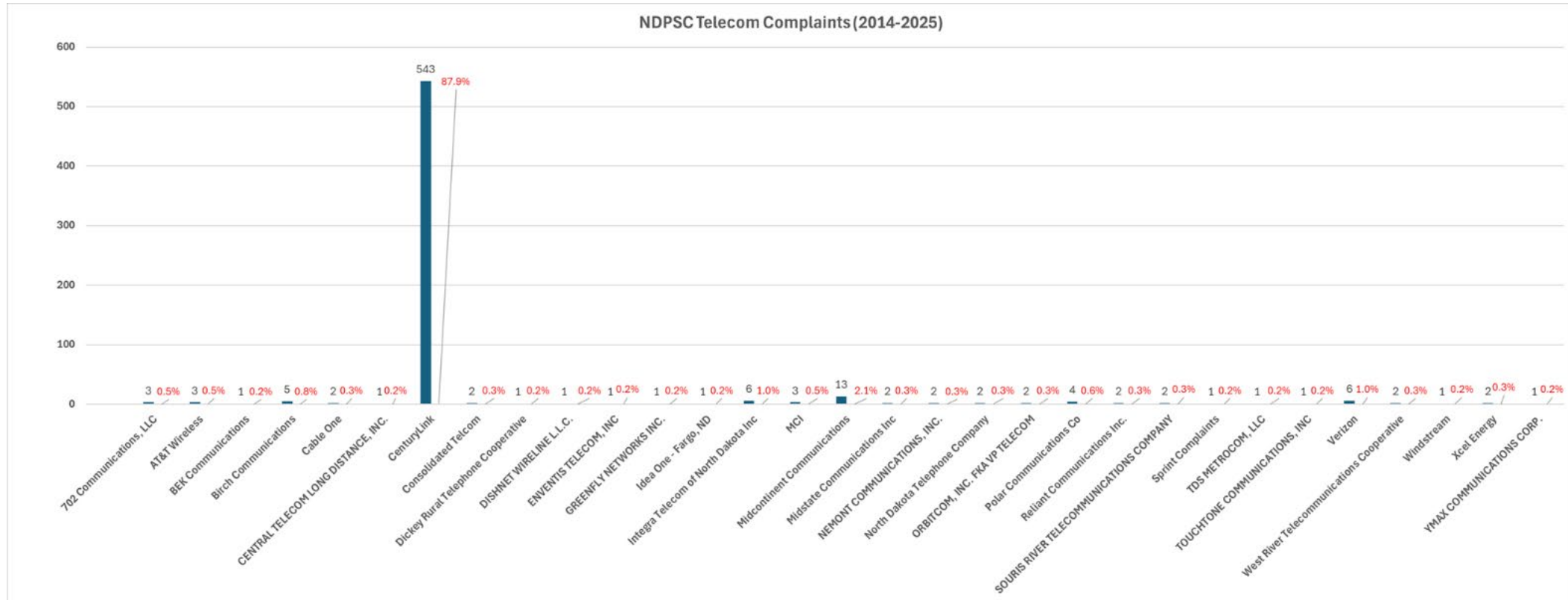
- CenturyLink reports to the FCC it can serve 2,465 of 3,661 locations (67%)
- CenturyLink states it provides 276 voice lines and 85 broadband lines
- Source: FCC National Broadband Map; CenturyLink Comments, Pg2

BEK Service:

- BEK provides 858 voice lines to 538 customers over a 3:1 ratio
- BEK Fiber available to 100% of 3,661 locations at speeds of up to 10 Gbps
- Source: BEK Business Records



Public Service Commission Complaint Record (2014-2025)



- CenturyLink/Lumen: 87.9% of all statewide telecom complaints
- BEK: zero telecom service complaints
- Source: North Dakota Public Service Commission Records.

Condition of CenturyLink Outside Plant in Valley City Exchange



Photographs from Exhibit 9 to BEK's Applications and the Affidavit of Derrick Bulawa:

- Field cabinets unsecured and open to weather
- Visible wiring exposed
- Aerial wires hanging from poles into public areas

CenturyLink states: "copper TDM/voice technology and traditional ILEC concepts is nearing end-of-life" – CL Comments, Pg 5



Highlights – CenturyLink Comments



- Confirms its broadband is not available to the entire exchange (Pg 2, para 1, line 2)
- States it offers phone service across the exchange but provides no maps, location data, or facility descriptions supporting this claim (Pg 2, para 1, line 3)
- Does not oppose BEK's ETC designation (Pg 2, para 2, line 1)
- Does not question BEK's fitness or ability to provide service (Pg 2, para 2, line 2)
- Opposes relinquishment of its ILEC certificate (Pg 2, para 2, line 2)
- Asserts the ND PSC does not have ILEC certification authority, BUT:
 - Did not raise this objection in the MLGC/Leonard and Kindred proceedings
 - Stated in the Red River/Wahpeton proceedings: "does not object to the commission assigning Red River as an incumbent local exchange carrier"
 - Opposes the same action for BEK in Valley City (Pg 2, para 2, line 5)

CenturyLink Comments (Cont'd)



- "[I]investment in such technology in remote areas is not likely to be feasible soon, absent unique circumstances" (Pg 4, para 2, line 8)
- "Provider of last resort obligations impose significant expense to maintain telephone service to remote customers" (Pg 5, para 3, line 2)
- "[CenturyLink] does not qualify for ongoing federal high-cost support in North Dakota," but received \$33,940,440 in CAF Phase II disbursements in North Dakota between 2016 and 2021 (Pg 4, para 2, line 4)

- Does not address the fact that this Commission has granted substantially similar relief in two prior proceedings (Case Nos. PU-24-386/PU-24-387; Case Nos. PU-25-185/PU-25-190).

Relief Requested by BEK



1. Grant BEK the CPCN for the Valley City Exchange
2. Designate BEK as the ILEC of record for the Valley City Exchange for the purposes of North Dakota Law.
3. Expand BEK's ETC Designation to include the Valley City Exchange
4. Reclassify CenturyLink's certificate in the Valley City Exchange to a competitive carrier, consistent with North Dakota Law.



Steele · Bismarck · Valley City