

Proposal for Expanded Internet Service to Round Mountain, Montgomery Creek, Big Bend Communities



Fountain Wind Project and ShastaBeam Team Up to bring Much-Needed Wireless Internet to Intermountain Region

The Issue

Whether you live in the rural regions of Shasta County or one of the three cities, access to reliable, fast internet service has become vital to many parts of our lives. Good internet service is essential for public safety, education, business, health care, e-commerce, employment, and overall access to information.

Unfortunately, large portions of the County around the Round Mountain, Montgomery Creek, and Big Bend communities do not have access to broadband internet service. In the limited places where it is available, service is not always reliable, reasonably priced, and the connection speeds are slower than the benchmark standard established by the FCC.² Children relying on remote learning or seniors seeking telemedicine care require more robust service than what is available in the limited locations where internet connection can be found.

Through Fountain Wind Project's outreach efforts with local community members and residents, it became clear that one of the most widely identified needs in the community was access to reliable, cost-efficient internet service.

The Solution

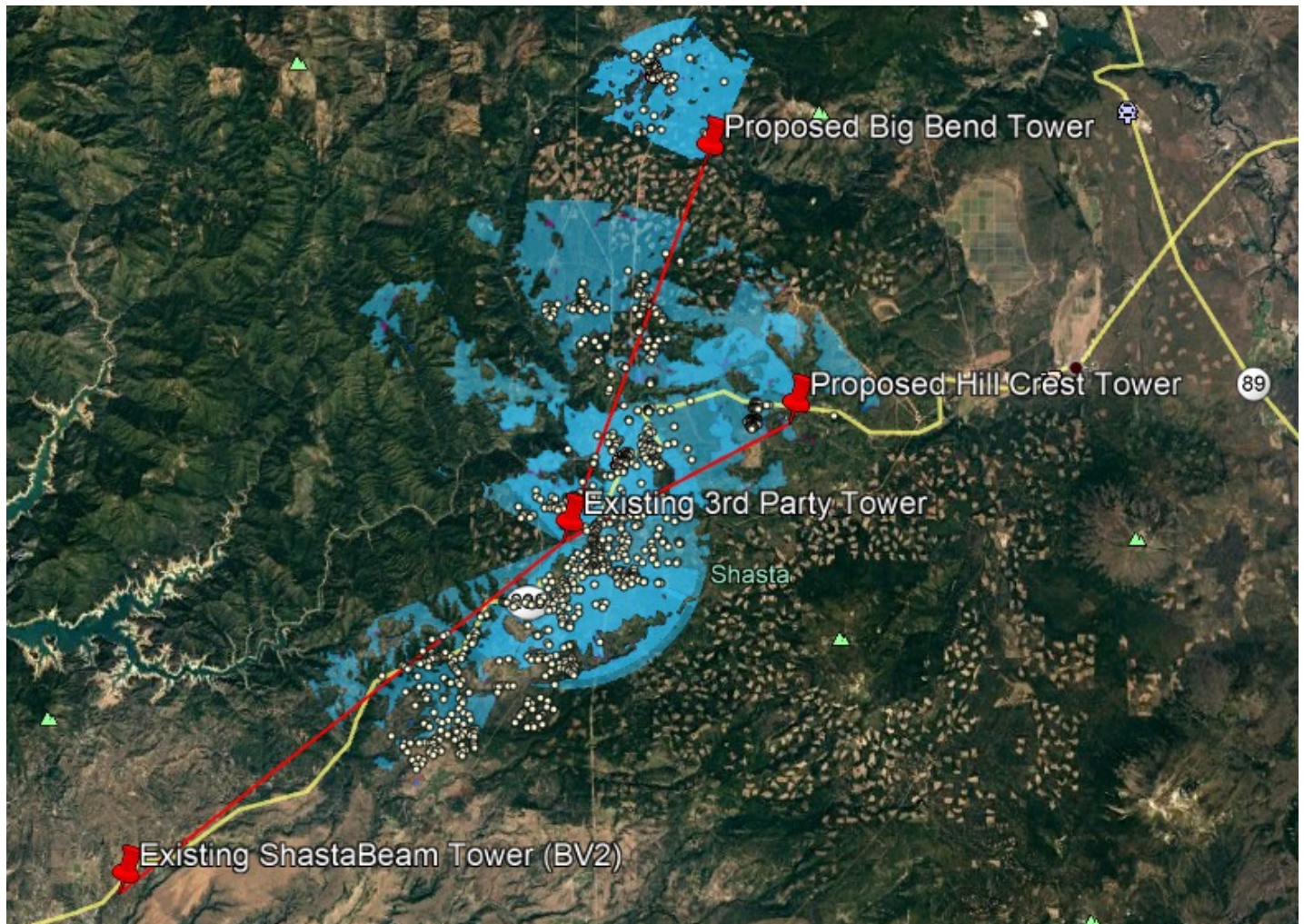
The Fountain Wind Project, as part of its mission to bring broad community benefits to the Intermountain Region, in particular the Round Mountain, Montgomery Creek, and Big Bend communities, has teamed up with ShastaBeam Wireless Internet to expand wireless internet service in the region. In the Fall of 2020, ConnectGen's Director, Henry Woltag, reached out to Andy Main, managing partner of Mountain Tower and Network Company, LLC, dba ShastaBeam, of Redding, California, for assistance in evaluating the expansion opportunity.

ShastaBeam provides wireless internet service in other parts of rural Shasta County using a series of towers that allow residents and businesses in the most remote areas to obtain internet service. This service does not require line of sight satellite dishes or access to cable or fiber networks but still provides high-speed, reliable, unlimited data internet service at multiple plan levels of service to match individual's needs.

Fountain Wind and ShastaBeam have identified locations for two potential additional tower sites that would offer coverage to over 90% of specified residential and business addresses in the Big Bend, Round Mountain, and Montgomery Creek communities, totaling approximately 700 addresses. Most of these locations currently have either no or very limited access to internet service. The proposal would also provide an alternative to the current single incumbent utility in the area that presently provides limited internet service.

1. **The Federal Communications Commission established a benchmark for 25 Megabits per second ("Mbps") download and 3 Mbps upload speed <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-20-50A1.pdf>. Current service provided by Frontier Communications is limited to 6 Mbps upload.**

The diagram below shows the proposed tower network that would provide ShastaBeam's internet service to the subject area. The blue shading represents the area where internet services would be available, given the location of the new towers while taking into account the topography of the surrounding areas. Facilities could be located at the top of the existing tower west of Round Mountain. The white dots represent the residential and business addresses represent while the red lines represent wireless services provided between ShastaBeam's towers, starting at the existing Bella Vista Ridge (BV2) tower.



As part of the Project's Community Benefit Program, Fountain Wind has proposed to fund the installation of the two new towers and associated equipment, estimated at \$200,000. By offsetting the initial capital cost of installing the new infrastructure, ShastaBeam will be able to reduce the cost of internet service to the residents and business owners within the Round Mountain, Montgomery Creek, and Big Bend communities. ShastaBeam is also committed to working with the local communities to obtain financial benefits offered by the FCC's recently enacted Emergency Broadband Benefit Program ("EBBP").²

By funding the construction of these new internet facilities, Fountain Wind builds on its commitment to be a long-term contributor and member to this community. Prior to Fountain Wind's outreach effort, there were no plans to bring this expanded service to the Round Mountain, Montgomery Creek, and Big Bend area due to the dispersed population and rugged terrain. However, Fountain Wind believes access to fast, reliable internet service is essential to the region's public health, business, education, and safety and is proud to sponsor this project with ShastaBeam.

2. The benefits of the FCC's EBBP are explained in greater detail at <https://www.fcc.gov/consumer-faq-emergency-broadband-benefit>. The funding provided by this program are intended to support broadband services and devices to help low-income households gain access to reliable internet service.

About ShastaBeam Wireless Internet

ShastaBeam Wireless Internet has been providing high-speed Internet services to Northern California since 2004. The company-owned network of 30+ towers service North State communities in areas where cable and fiber services provided by AT&T, Spectrum, and other urban internet providers do not offer services. ShastaBeam services are an estimated 90% rural based.

In 2020, ShastaBeam was instrumental in helping to develop new county ordinances that allow for the development of fixed wireless antenna towers without the requirement of going through the expensive and time-consuming California Environment Quality Act (“CEQA”) process. As a result of the new ordinance, ShastaBeam can now erect new internet service towers in Shasta County economically and efficiently, increasing its ability to service the County’s rural population with just a building permit application. In 2021, ShastaBeam is on schedule to install one tower per month in its market area.

ShastaBeam is in the early stages of evaluating how to bring its internet service further into parts of Eastern Shasta County and the Intermountain Region. By working with the Fountain Wind Project to expand into the communities of Round Mountain, Montgomery Creek, and Big Bend, provides ShastaBeam the opportunity to evaluate the possibility of expanding further east into the Burney community.

About Fountain Wind

The Fountain Wind Project is a proposed 216 MW wind project in northeastern Shasta County. The project will be located on privately owned timberlands near Highway 299, approximately six miles west of Burney, and is anticipated to be operational by the end of 2023. The Fountain Wind Project is committed to supporting Shasta County through its proposed Community Benefit Program. This program consists of approximately \$2,000,000 in funding to local programs covering education, public safety, fire protection, and workforce development.