7:15AM	Registration Opened, sponsored by Millennium

7:15AM – 8:00AM	Networking Breakfast with Exhibitors, sponsored by Airway

8:00AM – 8:07AM — **Welcome & Introduction:** Gary Bolton, President & CEO, Fiber Broadband Association

8:07AM – 8:10AM — **Platinum Sponsor Welcome & Introductions**
Ashley Brown, Senior Director, Field Marketing, Adtran

8:10AM – 8:40AM — **Opening Keynote:** Connecting the Heartland
Solomon Graves, Director of Public Policy, Heartland Forward

8:40AM – 9:10 AM — **A Case in Point: Ritter Communications, Striking the Balance between Self and State-Funded Broadband Expansion**
Ritter Communications explores the complexities of both self-funded and state-funded fiber expansions, emphasizing design, permitting, local communications, and customer acquisition challenges. The team will highlight strategies for navigating these hurdles, shedding light on the intricacies involved in expanding fiber networks. Their insights provide valuable guidance for fiber broadband companies seeking to overcome obstacles and effectively expand their reach in Arkansas.
Moderator: Victor Esposito, Chief Technology Officer, Ritter Communications
Panelists:
- Raynessia Chandler, Director of Support Services, Ritter Communications
- Katie Hall, Construction Communication Manager, Ritter Communications
- Josh Worley, Director OSP Planning, Ritter Communications
- Tony McKay, Vice President, Field Operations, Ritter Communications

9:10AM – 9:35AM — **Fireside Chat: Building a Scalable Middle Mile**
Doug Maglothin, CEO, Diamond States Network with Scott Jackson, National Market Manager II, Graybar

9:35AM — **Breakfast Sponsor Remarks** – Jordan Trimble, Account Manager

9:35AM – 10:00AM   *Networking Break with Exhibitors, sponsored by*

10:00AM – 10:02AM   **Networking Break Sponsor Remarks** – Heather Burnett Gold, Vice President, External Affairs, Mears Broadband

10:02AM – 10:40AM   **Public Private Partnerships: The Power of Collaboration**
The challenge of connecting everyone everywhere will take more effort and financial resources than any one entity can provide. How can public institutions, private equity firms, and research organizations help states maximize federal funding programs to ensure that community programs are fully funding so that telehealth, education, digital equity, and workforce training efforts have the impact intended? This panel will discuss best practices, share insights from successful public and private partnerships, and highlight opportunities for new collaborative investments as the industry looks to close the digital divide for all Americans.

Moderator: Ash Brown, Senior Director, Field Marketing, Adtran
Panelists:
- Randy Everett, General Manager, Connect2First Internet, LLC, CIO, First Electric Cooperative Corp. Inc.
- Patrick Mulhearn, Director of Public Policy & New Market Development, Ting Internet
- Steve Bandy General Manager, OzarkGo

10:40AM – 11:30AM   **Local Focus: Permit Me to Deploy Fiber**
One of the biggest challenges facing new broadband networks is the paperwork, specifically the environmental reviews and permitting approvals needed before construction can start. Given that most networks will likely be deployed across a combination of state, federal, and privately owned land, and possibly Tribal-owned land, or access to railways, bridge/overpass infrastructures, pols or towers, ducts or conduits or federal and state highways, the number of federal, state, and local agencies an operator must work with can be overwhelming. In addition, any project funded through federal grants will also need to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, adding further requirements to the deployment and compliance processes. This panel will discuss how broadband operators manage this process and work through it quickly and efficiently to ensure fiber broadband networks are completed within federal funding requirements.

Moderator: Heather Burnett Gold, Vice President, External Affairs, Mears Broadband
Panelists:
- Bo Gresham, Vice President of Strategy, DYCOM
- Kelly McGriff, Vice-President and Deputy General Counsel, Uniti Group Inc.
- John Idoux, Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy, Arkansas, Brightspeed
- Dean McDowell, Director of Fiber Operations, Arkansas Fiber Network

11:30AM – 12:00PM   **Fireside Chat: How Arkansas Lights Up Communities**
Glen Howie, State Broadband Director, Arkansas Department of Commerce Broadband Office
with Evann Freeman, Vice President of Government and Community Relations, EPB

12:00PM – 12:02PM   **Lunch Sponsor Remarks** - Scott Jackson, National Market Manager, Graybar, FBA Board Member

12:02PM – 12:45PM   *Networking Lunch-Sponsored by Graybar/Fujitsu*

12:45PM – 1:15PM   *Networking Dessert with Exhibitors*

1:15PM – 1:50PM   **Fireside Chat: Creating Connections in Little Rock**
Honorable Frank Scott, Jr., Mayor, City of Little Rock, with by Marissa Mitrovich, Vice President of Public Policy, Fiber Broadband Association

1:50PM – 2:30PM   **Deployment Challenges and Opportunities: Middle Mile**
Pushing fiber further to connect all Americans is the state's goal of federal programs like the NTIA's BEAD program. Ensuring that exponential increase in data traffic doesn't face a bottleneck as it traverses the network is critical. Upgrading the operator's middle mile ensures that rural network expansion to support FTTx, 55G and Fixed Wireless Access deployments can deliver the services promised in areas with little or no infrastructure today. This panel will discuss why focusing on just the access portion of the network may be setting the industry up for a headache, easily avoided, but putting equal attention on the middle mile and its role is service delivery and customer experience.

Moderator: Joe Baeumel, Vice President, Business Development and Partner Strategy, KGPCo.
Panelists:
- Sachin Gupta, Director of Government Business and Economic Development, Centranet
- Jill McDaniel, Chief Operating Officer, Diamond State Networks
- Rob Shema, Director of Government Affairs and Business Development, Alta Fiber

2:30PM – 3:00PM   *Networking Break with Exhibitors sponsored by*

3:00PM – 3:02PM   **Networking Reception Sponsor Remarks –** Richard Coleman, VP of Sales, CompaxDigital

3:00PM – 3:40PM   **Federal Funding Success Stories: Building Networks One Acronym at a Time**
While current attention has focused on the Department of Commerce's NTIA BEAD funding, the FCC, USDA, Treasury, and other government agencies have been allowing resources to address the digital equity gap for years. During this session, panels will discuss what worked, what didn't, and present best practices learned from leveraging federal grants from programs like ReConnect and the Affordable Connectivity Program to deliver broadband services.

Moderator: Michael Howe, Account Manager, Nokia

Panelists:

- Jeremiah Sloan, CEO, Craighead Electric Cooperative and em**power**
- Barret Ewing, Director of Engineering, Wave Rural Connect
- Tony Matlock, General Field Representative, AR & LA, Telecommunications Program, Rural Development, USDA

3:40PM – 4:15PM   **Finding First Time Fiber Broadband Customers**
As broadband funding enables operators to reach new customers, many of these will be first time subscribers to fiber broadband. What do operators need to understand as they look to engage with residences that were formerly unserved? This panel discussion will focus on the tools, tips and best practices as operators close the digital divide for the communities they serve and the people each connects.

Moderator: David Brown, AVP Customer Success, GTM Transformation, Calix
Panelists:

- Matt Miiller, General Manager, Clay County Connect
- Buster Brady, Director of Plant Operations, Townes Tele-Communications
- Kimberly McKinley, Chief Marketing Officer, Utopia Fiber

4:15PM – 4:35PM   **Closing Remarks:** Evann Freeman, Vice President of Government and Community Relations, EPB

4:35PM – 5:15PM   Networking Reception, sponsored by compaxDigital