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Iowa Telecommunications Services Inc. Q4 2008 Earnings Call Transcript

Question-and-Answer Session

Operator

(Operator Instructions) And our first question will come from [Simon Slattery] – Morgan Stanley.

[Simon Slattery] – Morgan Stanley

Could you talk about the broadband stimulus package and what you think the opportunities might be for Iowa there? And also on Sherburne, just you talked about some uncertainty on the closing, where are we with the state approvals and any other approvals you need to get and what's your best guess in timing at this point?

Alan L. Wells

Good morning, Simon. Thank you. Let me take those, I'll do it in reverse order. As far as Sherburne, we made the regulatory filings with both the Iowa Commission and the Minnesota Commission. I believe they've responded to some questions that were raised in Minnesota. I think our folks – that were fairly routine and don't see any obstacles in the way at this point, that we're aware of that would prevent the approvals of being obtained and pretty short order we hope.

We're hoping for a mid-year close, but it's dependent upon approvals of both the state level and the FCC, but we think things are on track for a mid-year close.

And as far as the broadband stimulus package, I think we like many other carriers are looking closely at the rules that might evolve of what the applications for those might look like. I think, as you know Simon, if you look at our operation despite our very, very rural nature, we've been unable to obtain U.S. sub funding in the past. We think given our profile, we probably – we think a fairly good candidate to stand in line for applications of both the RUS and NTIA, but until more details come out about how those plans are really going to work, it's kind of difficult to predict what might happen there.

[Simon Slattery] – Morgan Stanley

And maybe just a word on Bishop, you really didn't talk too much about the integration and how you feel about state of the plans and the customers and everything.

Alan L. Wells

Sure, I think we're very pleased with our Bishop transaction. The state of the plan is excellent; they've got an excellent network there. Customer base seems to be fairly stable and very happy with their

operation and we're kind of in the midst of our integration. We're in the process of converting our systems over and we think we'll see the benefits of that sometime in the next quarter.

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