

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: A-Vu Media Corporation

Project Title: A-Vu Media - new bundled broadband for Older Adults, Disabled, and HealthCare Adoption

Project Type: Sustainable Adoption

Executive Summary

The 2009 Pew Internet and American Life Project identified 4 primary factors that impair broadband adoption: lack of availability, not perceived as affordable, not perceived as usable, and not perceived as relevant. Older adults and the disabled populations often face more than one of these barriers at the same time. Their historical low broadband adoption rate creates less interest to build connections, appliances, and services that meet their unique needs which, in turn, reinforces their perception of low value. This set of circumstances must be addressed if we are to deliver new strategies that will significantly utilize broadband as the high value resource that it can and should be for older adults and the disabled. The lack of effective broadband connections to these populations is also a significant barrier to the development and implementation of broadband based healthcare delivery options that can both lower the cost of care and improve health status. Since these populations represent several of the highest cost segments for healthcare we must include them in all next generation healthcare strategies to achieve meaningful, demonstrated health status improvement. We believe that broadband can and should be a significant resource to reduce isolation, improve quality of life, extend independent living, and improve health status while reducing cost. The proposed A-Vu Media project will produce significant benefits for the community of Winona, MN, but its most important benefit will be the demonstration of a new broadband strategy that can be a model for self funding commercial implementation throughout the United States. We believe that the A-Vu broadband strategy can create a 70% or greater broadband adoption rate for older adults and the disabled – populations we must address to the benefit of the country.

A-Vu Media is a public/private partnership based in Winona, Minnesota, and created by A-Vu Media, Hiawatha Broadband Communications, Winona Health Services, and Home and Community Options. This partnership will develop new broadband solutions for older adults and the disabled. A highly simplified user interface will provide access to broadband services with an integrated platform providing video, internet and phone services to a unified TV/Monitor and phone handset. The core system will not require PC capability or any self provisioning. Automated connections will be provisioned for the primary user and approved family, friends, and caregivers. Both the primary user and that user's personal network will realize significant value from the new system by addressing the issues of availability, affordability, usability and relevancy of needed services. The user's personal network

contacts are expected to be a major influence in the decision to pay for A-Vu services as a future commercial purchase. Use of the A-Vu broadband system will be managed by a US based 24/7 customer service unit that has full remote control of all user features. This managed network creates immediate opportunities for healthcare and community organizations to reach these populations with new and compelling services that have been constrained by a lack of broadband connections or user capability. Healthcare Networks, Disabled Service Operators, and Senior Housing Facilities of all care levels have also identified significant expected value from implementing the A-Vu managed broadband system within their respective operations.

Most proposed solutions to the broadband needs of older adults, the disabled and healthcare focus on cost reduction or simplification but still require a user to self provision a PC on an open access network – a key barrier. A-Vu is a differentiating concept that creates value from user simplified access to a level of integrated services that have never been offered in a similar way on a secure fully managed broadband network. Today's digital technology can be repackaged to deliver this concept. A-Vu will be an application package that can work on any existing high capacity broadband network.

The A-Vu Media implementation partnership includes, Winona Health Services, Home and Community Options (disabled housing services) and Hiawatha Broadband Communications. Each of these organizations is already a technology leader in their respective industries with demonstrated results. They all have a documented history of successful innovation with new technology development, design and implementation. These organizations all endorse the A-Vu concept as the next generation solution to enhance and increase services, lower cost, improve quality of life, and extend independent living for the target populations. Other community, county, and state organizations have also made commitments to participate in the development and implementation of this new system. Each has identified value added applications they can realize through the structure and capabilities of this new managed network. The greater community of Winona, MN, is an ideal environment to do the Alpha test of the A-Vu system. It is small enough to have very significant community participation but it has enough scale to assess the impact on cost and desired outcomes. The proposed project will include a complete profile of broadband use and related healthcare costs before and after implementation of the A-Vu system.

The total budget for this project is \$12.8 million with a 26% participant match. This results in a request for \$9.4 million BTOP government funding. A significant portion of this budget is for salaries that create 28 new and 6 sustained positions for three years. Implementation in the first year also produces 5 FTEs. The evaluation of this grant based on what it can provide when deployed as a model for similar services throughout the county provides a deeply compelling project with national implications for older adults, the disabled and innovation in the delivery of healthcare services.