

## Broadband USA Applications Database

**Applicant Name:** Mid-South Community College

**Project Title:** Arkansas Delta Sustainable Broadband Adoption Project

**Project Type:** Sustainable Adoption

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### Executive Summary

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**Problem Statement:** The economically distressed Arkansas Delta is a rural region of great poverty, low wages, low academic achievement, and low workforce skills. In the belief that adoption arises from use, the Arkansas Delta Sustainable Broadband Adoption Project will make job-oriented postsecondary education available via existing wireless broadband to 12 Arkansas Delta counties, also some of the poorest in the nation. Nine of the Region's 12 counties face most critical education needs and the remaining three face critical education needs (The Education Needs Index).

Although G3 broadband services are available everywhere in Arkansas, less than 10% of the Arkansas Delta population uses them. By comparison, broadband has reached 60% of households nationwide. To increase usage, this Project will overcome three barriers: cost, relevance and ease of use.

**Cost:** This Project will implement the software-based GeoVideo System, avoiding the fixed point hardware costs that have previously retarded broadband adoption. Upon implementation, students anywhere in Arkansas can access postsecondary education through existing G3 broadband services. The marginal cost of adding a new student will be near zero, and the student's remote terminal cost will be low as the Project relies on off-the-shelf technology, that can be funded with student financial aid.

**Relevance:** The Arkansas Delta Training & Education Consortium (ADTEC), a partnership of the 5 Delta community colleges, and the ADTEC University Center work closely with community anchor institutions to offer students educational pathways that lead to greater income and more satisfying work in their chosen field.

Ease of Use: ADTEC and its partners will design user-friendly interfaces for ease of use, supported by user training. ADTEC will also man a multi-level full-time help desk with skilled support staff.

Solution: In the past, broadband implementation has relied on hardware solutions and the deployment of mobile systems, or installation of fixed wire, requiring expensive installation costs and recurring, expensive equipment upgrades. This Project supports universal access by implementing a software solution whereby users simply “plug” into existing wireless or wired systems regardless of location, distance or time. This Project unites the public and private sectors to give users any-time/anywhere access to postsecondary education that is so critical to their future. The ADTEC University Center will use the GeoVideo System and universal G3 broadband coverage to provide 3,500 people in the Region with their first practical access to postsecondary education. The known immediate benefits of postsecondary education will attract students and their households to the use of broadband, substantially increasing broadband penetration in the remote, underdeveloped Delta. Because the GeoVideo System will allow complex, sophisticated synchronous/asynchronous collaboration, the students will become active and sophisticated broadband users while acquiring postsecondary education. This Project will optimize interconnectivity and training to promote innovation and economic development, thus supporting economic recovery. The broader impact of this Project is profound and will serve as a model for other rural regions to provide broadband access to support education, emergency responders and tele-health providers.

ADTEC will make the Project technology available (through contribution of a royalty free license by GeoVideo) for any governmental or charitable purpose, such as to benefit first responders and tele-health providers. With inexpensive adaptations, government or charitable organizations can use the Project technology for such diverse purposes as improving access to individuals with disabilities, promoting economy recovery, facilitating innovation, and promoting economic development, all of which can benefit from sophisticated broadband multimedia collaboration. Over 10,000 potential subscribers will be reached.

Area to be Served: This Project will serve 12 Arkansas Delta counties where persons living below the poverty level, by county, ranges from 16.3% to 37.2% (17.6%, Arkansas; 13.0%, nation); the median household income, by county, ranges from \$24,195 to \$39,808 (\$38,239, Arkansas; \$50,740, nation); and baccalaureate degree attainment for the region, is 9.9% (16.7%, Arkansas; 24.4%, nation).

Applicant Qualifications: Mid-South Community College (MSCC), the lead ADTEC community college, will manage this Project. MSCC has vast experience in federal grants management. In the past 4 years, MSCC has received 13 federal and state grants, 10 of which were federal grants. They range from \$250,000 to

\$5,935,402, funded by the National Science Foundation, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Education, and the Delta Regional Authority. MSCC and GeoVideo have collaborated on this Project for over a year, and a detailed Statement of Work is available if requested. GeoVideo has the experience and skilled resources to adapt the GeoVideo System to MSCC's requirements and meet the budget and timeline of the project.

Jobs to be Created or Saved: Using techniques described in Measuring Broadband's Economic Impact Report (Gillet, February 2006), it is estimated that 1,470 direct jobs will be created, and 4,410 (x 3) indirect jobs will result.

Overall Cost of Project: The cost of this Project will be \$5,574,980, of which \$1,142,871 will be provided as a cash match by MSCC. MSCC has a federally approved indirect cost rate of 40%, which is \$2,229,992 for this Project. Because of the importance of this Project to the region, MSCC will forego its indirect costs.