

## Broadband USA Applications Database

**Applicant Name:** Siskiyou County Economic Development Council

**Project Title:** Siskiyou Broadband Last Mile Project

**Project Type:** Last Mile Remote

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### Executive Summary

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Siskiyou County, geographically the fifth largest county in the state of California covers more than 6,347 square miles is located in the northernmost section of California with a population of approximately 44,301 people. The county includes nine incorporated cities including Dorris, Dunsmuir, Etna, Ft. Jones, Montague, Mt Shasta, Tulelake, Weed and Yreka, plus another 10 unincorporated population centers as well as various ranches, camps and businesses. The county has 32 local k-12 schools and local education agencies which serve some 6,200 students, as well as local community college. The county also contains 96 institutions that support local, state and federal emergency and support services. Siskiyou County's unemployment rate is consistently nearly double that of the state average; in December of 2007 the state unemployment rate was 5.9% while Siskiyou County struggled at 10.5%. Currently Siskiyou County has an unemployment rate of 18.10%. According to census data 18.6% of residents are below poverty level and an average of 51% have income below the median income level for the area and thus qualify as part of the targeted income group for federal grant programs such as HUD. Rural Broadband is an issue that affects all the communities in Siskiyou County. Each city has supported the Siskiyou County Economic Development Council (SCEDC) in pursuing this critical infrastructure opportunity. The SCEDC has formed a coalition of local ISP/WISP providers, k-128 Education, Community College, healthcare, Karuk Tribal Council, business leaders, backbone service providers and public elected officials. The SCEDC has assessed the requirements and the opportunity, and has created the Siskiyou County Broadband Consortium (SCBC), a collaborative team of public and private leadership to bring broadband to rural remote Siskiyou County. The SCBC was established to address the lack of convenient, affordable broadband connectivity throughout the county. Currently, there is limited last mile infrastructure for broadband, and even where broadband technology exists, it is available only to a very small service area. The broadband services in these areas are primarily DSL based technology which is limited by the distance it must travel from the Telco Central Office (CO) to the customers address. This leaves large sections of the County without access to the DSL service. The majority of the region is served by terrestrial copper communications lines. The copper line systems are unable to provide widespread deployment of broadband solutions to the region. All of the current solutions that are available in the limited areas of the county average more than double the monthly recurring costs of broadband in metropolitan areas in the state. This collaborative LAST MILE project will expand coverage areas to end users as part of the collaborative middle mile, last mile and community computing applications. This Consortium is pleased to submit a collaborative application that offers a delivery model that will be easily replicated not only throughout California, but in rural communities throughout the United States. More importantly, this model provides a sustainable method for delivery of broadband services to any

underserved area within the state. In recent months, the county has been unable to attract new businesses and jobs to the area because of the lack of communications infrastructure that would enable a business to be competitive in today's economy. This project will enable cost effective services for businesses and consumers resulting in positive job growth and population retention. Siskiyou County has a total of 21,947 households and 2,452 businesses. The LAST MILE project reaches nearly one-fourth of the households in Siskiyou County that are currently unserved or underserved. Siskiyou County has a total of 77 public buildings including government, schools, libraries, Tribes, and healthcare. Many of these key facilities are located in the proposed last mile service areas such as fire halls, libraries, rural healthcare clinics and tribal housing facilities. The Consortium will provide an open, middle mile broadband infrastructure that will allow internet service providers with points of connectivity to broadband access. This access to middle mile fiber allows LAST MILE providers the opportunity to expand and reach out to the unserved population centers surrounding communities that currently are underserved due to the high rate to provide service. The Consortium proposal is designed as an open system which bypasses any potential discrimination points by connecting into the wholesale internet infrastructure. Finally, the program provides for open access which allows government, healthcare, libraries, business, tribal and citizen consumers to sign up for broadband. This creates the model for a sustainable program since the rates are projected to be competitive with rates charged in metropolitan areas. In spite of, or perhaps as a direct result of, economic challenges exhibited by staggering statistical data, the citizens of Siskiyou County have joined together in collaborative efforts to bring growth, sustainability and economic opportunity to the region. All nine cities and the county have formally joined together to obtain State recognition as an Enterprise Zone. This successful designation put economic development at the top of the strategic plan for all communities. The Siskiyou County Economic Development Council (SCEDC) was named by unanimous resolution in all 10 jurisdictions as the leader in Economic Development for the county. This leadership and collaborative style made the SCEDC the logical choice to take the lead to bringing rural broadband connectivity to Siskiyou County. To do so, the SCEDC designed and created the Siskiyou County Broadband Consortium to implement this public/private partnership and create middle and last mile opportunity for Siskiyou County. This Consortium is comprised of an executive team representing the public jurisdictions, a world renown microwave technology provider with a Tier 1 Internet backbone supplier, an experienced, locally owned Siskiyou County-based network operations management company, an experienced last mile provider, a CLEC Telephone Company who is an experienced RUS borrower, business owners, the community college and elected local government officials all closely coordinated by a project management and systems integration organization with a proven track record in successfully organizing, managing and deploying large, complex technology and telecommunication installations for public agencies in the state of California including the Office of the State CIO. Utilizing current, competitively bid, government procurement schedules including California Multiple Award Schedules (CMAS), as well as soliciting competitive bids for other product and services, the total cost for implementation and deployment of the Siskiyou Broadband Last Mile Project is \$10,072,210.00 In a white paper on the effects of Broadband deployment on employment published by the Brookings Institute on July 2007, their findings were as follows: "We find that non-farm private employment and employment in several industries is positively associated with broadband use. More specifically, for every one percentage point increase in broadband penetration in a state, employment is projected to increase by 0.2 to 0.3 percent per year." Our

proposal will increase broadband penetration in Siskiyou County by 90% which using the statistical model would provide opportunity to create between 180 to 270 jobs per year.