

## **Broadband USA Applications Database**

**Applicant Name:** Comanche County Telephone Co., Inc.

**Project Title:** Comanche County - North Texas - Oklatel Public Computer Centers

**Project Type:** Public Computer Center

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### **Executive Summary**

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#### **PROBLEM**

Successful broadband deployment cannot be accomplished merely by providing infrastructure on a large scale. There are barriers to broadband adoption by individuals that must be overcome. People will not generally be willing to make a significant economic investment in broadband (e.g. purchasing a computer, subscribing to a broadband service, etc.) if they are unfamiliar with the product or service being offered.

#### **APPROACH**

CCTC plans to set up a 7 workstation computer center located in a portion of its headquarter's facilities. Those headquarters are located in De Leon, Texas. The center will be open to the public for use and will be staffed by a person whose primary function will be to be both a welcoming presence and a hands-on resource to users who may be unfamiliar with the capabilities of computers and/or the benefits of broadband. The staff person will also be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and functioning of the computer center. Back up staff support for the center will be provided by the existing customer service representatives (CSRs) at the company.

The same model will be used in setting up computer centers at the headquarters of affiliated companies North Texas Telephone Company in Byers, TX and Oklahoma Telephone and Telegraph, Inc. in Dustin, OK. The Byers location will have 4 workstations and the Dustin location will have 6 workstations. An additional new employee funded under the computer center grant will be responsible for the centers in Byers and Dustin. Like the CCTC model, existing CSRs will provide back- up staff support in Byers and Dustin.

#### **AREAS SERVED**

The computer center will be open to the public at large but our primary purpose will be to serve the citizens of ILEC service areas of the three companies. CCTC is headquartered in De Leon, TX and serves

customers in Comanche, Eastland, Brown, Mills and Erath counties. This area has a population of over 15,000. Census indicates that the average per capita income across this area is 80% of the Texas state average, and appropriately 58% of school students are considered economically disadvantaged. The largest minority group, at 20%, is Hispanic. Since the penetration rate for broadband in this area is less than 40%, we see our potential universe of users to be 9000 people, but realistically we look to work with a growing number of individuals or groups (seniors, school age children, small business owners, etc.) by encouraging them to sample the benefits of broadband with the goal of assisting them towards the adoption of broadband in their own homes or businesses.

If the application is successful, CCTC will also use the new employee stationed at CCTC as trainer and outreach coordinator. That person will use the computer centers for hands-on training classes and will also be charged with working with schools, economic development officials, tribal leaders, senior citizens groups and others to promote both the use of the computer centers and the increased use of broadband.

#### QUALIFICATIONS

CCTC has a 57 year track record as a provider of telecommunications services in Comanche County and surrounding area. The company has a strong management team in place as well as a seasoned and dedicated work force. Over the course of its existence CCTC has continually enhanced its service offerings, with upgrades in digital, wireless and data services. CCTC has already deployed DSL to some of its subscribers, and this broadband project will allow all of CCTC's subscribers and their neighbors in the communities of Comanche and Gustine to receive access to true broadband service from an experienced locally owned provider.

The same description of an experienced and dedicated local service provider also applies to North Texas Telephone Company and Oklahoma Telephone & Telegraph, Inc.

#### JOBS

CCTC will add a full-time position to staff the center in DeLeon and to do the training and outreach work for all three centers. A half-time position will be hired to manage the computer centers in Byers and Dustin. The front office personnel at the three companies, already very welcoming to its customer base, will also be used to direct citizens to the computer center and to encourage people to utilize and embrace broadband. That ongoing assistance to the computer centers will enhance six jobs at the three companies.

## COST

The overall cost of the computer center project is \$187,760.