Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: City of Hiawassee

Project Title: Wireless Hiawassee

Project Type: Last Mile Remote

_______________________ Executive Summary _____________________

The City of Hiawassee is proposing a public-private partnership to implement “Wireless Hiawassee”. This partners will include the City of Hiawassee, the Blue Ridge Mountain Electrical Membership Cooperative (GMEMEC) and I-Linc Technologies. Benefits: The “Wireless Hiawassee” Concept will provide the following benefits to Residents, Visitors, Business, Utility Customers and Taxpayers located within the City of Hiawassee: (1) Free Access to Wireless Internet Broadband (Up to 2 hours per day); (2) High-speed access to “strategic institutions”; (3) Expanded broadband access for Homes, Businesses and Visitors; (4) Encouragement of broadband demand; (5) Job Creation; (6) Public Safety; (7) Improved Law Enforcement; and (8) Improved City Utility Services. Overview: The BRMEMC has installed Fiber Optic Cable running the length of Main Street in City Right of Ways. The EMC in now in the process of installing new high power transmission lines running the length of the City on Main Street. Hiawassee is small geographically. The City limits runs one mile from the Hiawassee City Square. There are three Points of ingress and egress into the City by land. This geographic and highway configuration offers a unique opportunity for Wireless Broadband Access within Hiawassee at a low cost. The City proposes the installation of Broadband Broadcasting Units (I-Link) on the new EMC transmission power poles. The units will be connected the EMC Fiber Optic Cables now located within City and State Right of Ways. The City proposed the location of Public Safety Cameras on BRMEMC to be located at strategic points of interest. Safety cameras will be located at all three entrances into the City to monitor ingress and egress. Additionally, safety cameras within the City will monitor activity at the City Square, the City of Hiawassee (internal and external including Council Chambers and City Court), the Towns County Courthouse and key points of interest including all local banks and key business centers. Utility Security and Energy Saving: The ability to monitor Water Plant and Sewer Plant Operations and Security is of great interest to the City. The City has not had a low cost approach to Public Utilities Security. The Broadband Cameras allow greater security options at lower costs over fencing and human resources. Additionally, the wireless coverage offers the City the ability to perform future water meter readings via wireless technology. This reduces operating costs and use of automobiles. Wireless Broadband also allows for the future addition of read time monitoring of water production, storage and demand. Importantly Water System Demand Monitoring will allow for identification of potential leaks thereby reducing treated water loss and property damage. Wireless Broadband will also allow improved real time monitoring of water tank storage. Job Creation: Hiawassee is a retirement and tourism destination. The economy is driven by the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds located adjacent to the City Limit. The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds sponsors many prominent events including the Georgia Mountain Fair and national entertainment and festivals. Our retirement community generates local home sales and
construction. Expanded wireless broadband will accentuate our local strengths as a destination site. This in turn will create jobs and service opportunities. The initial concept provides for connection through use of a joint City, EMC and I-Link Web page. Log in will be limited to two hours per day to limit use of bandwidth. For usage greater than two hours, normal billing rates will apply and charge made to credit cards. A third party vendor will maintain the billing system, which may be either the EMC or I-Link. Any net profits on the system will be used to establish a reserve fund for repairs and future expansion of service. Heath Care Access: Chatuge Regional Hospital and Nursing Home located in the City and will be provided broadband coverage under the City Proposal. A multitude of Doctor Offices and Clinics adjoin the Hospital and has a need for broadband service. Additionally, the Brasstown Manor Complex a private corporation providing Independent and Assisted Care will be served. Public Safety: The City proposes Bandwidth Compression Camera Monitoring for key public areas and community sites. These sites include City Hall (Security Issues), the City Square (Public Events and Festivals), and the Towns County Courthouse (Security Issues) and Federal Property including Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Area Parcel 52 [an area the City is seeking for a future City Park]. Training: The City recognizes that the installation of hardware along will not effectively generate the public usage that is critical for an effective and sustainable wireless program. We recognize that our area is composed of a high degree of older residents and retirees and destination visitors. Our population has limited ability to effectively use broadband or maximize its potential. Therefore, we are additionally asking for Fifty Thousand Dollars ($50,000.00) training and outreach monies to be used as follows: Five (5) Post Award Public Hearings/Training Sessions: (1) One General Session for the Public to be held at the Towns County Courthouse. The session is to be planned and cosponsored by the Vendors indentified in our proposal. The purpose is to prepare the Community on personal and business hardware to access the free broadband, the limitations on free access and advantages of broadband. (2) One Specialized Session cosponsored by local banks to advise the Public on advantages and usage of internet Banking. These sessions will be planned by the local banking institutions and will focus on the needs of existing banking customers. (3) One Specialized Session cosponsored by the Medical and Health Community with an emphasis on the Elderly and the Medical Advantages of Computers and the Internet. (4) One Specialized Session on Education and the internet cosponsored by the Board of Education and Young Harris College. The focus of this training will be toward the youth of our community. (5) One Specialized Session on Job Creation and the use of the internet. The Towns County Chamber of Commerce and the Towns County Tourism Association will cosponsor this session. We will additionally see the help of Young Harris College and various local vendors. The focus will be on the use of the internet for marketing, web page development and use the branding of “Wireless Hiawassee” as a marketing tool for a destination promotion. We also anticipate the assistance of the Tourism Association in a major marketing effort to promote “Wireless Hiawassee”. The Estimated Cost for Advertisement and Public Service Announcements, Publications and Training Materials, and Meals or Refreshments is $2,000.00 per Public Access Program: The City proposing the use of Fifteen Thousand Dollars ($15,000.00) be used for the distribution of at least five (5) computers with wireless capacity at key public sites. This will include standard software. These include the Towns County Courthouse, the Towns County Senior Center, the Hiawassee City Hall, the Towns County Board of Education, and one private business location such as a local shopping center or grocery store. The purpose will be for limited access to the public and those who do not possess a private computer. Software will be used to limit the sites that can be viewed.
Wireless Hiawassee School: The City proposes giving up to fifty individuals the opportunity to attend Saturday School for up to four (4) hours in two sessions. The School will be held in two sessions. The purpose of the school will be training directed towards accessing the internet, standard operating programs, and common software such as Word/WordPerfect and Business Applications. This will be a simplified curriculum directed at the basis. The curriculum will be developed in cooperation with our local vocational school. The course trainers will be from our local education facilities. Training will take place in public facilities. The Estimated Cost for Advertisement and Public Service Announcements, Publications and Training Materials, and Meals or Refreshments; $2,500.00 per Training Session or $5,000.00 Sub Total. Equipment Assistance Program: The City recognizes that many of our residents are on fixed incomes and do not currently have the hardware necessary to access even free internet or broadband service. We therefore are proposing an Equipment Assistance Program to provide equipment to those who qualify. The level of assistance will be on a sliding scale. Individuals on public assistance will receive a preference especially if children attending public schools are present in the household. This component is budgeted at $10,000.00. Specialized Equipment Needs: While we plan to provide citywide access to internet or broadband service, there may be technical, geographic and physical limitations. We therefore are proposing a Specialized Equipment Assistance Program. This component will allow the City to install additional equipment such as wireless broadcasters or repeater nodes to expand access. Wile the need for this program cannot be adequately known until installation of the initial project. However, the City proposes a contingency to address this probable need in the amount of $10,000.00. Total Funding requested is $435,568.00