BESTNET is a partnership of all Sacramento educational institutions, the Sacramento Metropolitan Cable Television Commission (SMCTC) and Sacramento area cable companies. BESTNET was originally designed to be completed in three phases, with the ultimate goal of serving all Sacramento educational entities and partners. Phase I, the backbone, is complete. Phase II, middle and high schools, will be complete by June 2010. BESTNET Phase III will extend an existing fiber optic (gig-e) network to provide broadband connections to 195 community anchor institutions in Sacramento County, California. Currently these institutions do not have the broadband capability to participate in nor take advantage of consolidated services, tremendous ongoing fiscal savings, delivery of enriched multimedia, streamed content and collaborative opportunities. BESTNET is a one-time funded network with no ongoing fiber leasing costs. Phase I and II were implemented utilizing public and private funding sources. SMCTC allocated $3.9 million with districts matching with another $3.9 million. Serving as a contractor to BESTNET, Comcast provided access to available dark fiber as an in-kind contribution, provided access to newly constructed dedicated fiber at its cost, and agreed to provide ongoing maintenance services as an in-kind contribution. These same elements are in place for Phase III; with the exception of school district funding that has been eliminated due to severe budget cuts. Phase III will leverage the assets of; (1) existing BESTNET connections and operational infrastructure at all Sacramento County secondary schools, community colleges and California State University, Sacramento; (2) the relationship with Comcast and its commitment to provide access to additional dedicated fiber at cost and to provide ongoing maintenance at no cost; and (3) a $3 million cash SMCTC contribution. Phase III will extend the broadband network to 189 elementary schools, four public libraries and provide an additional network path for four local community colleges, connect a community college center and open the network to public safety agencies in the future through fiber backbone and collaborative facility joint use. Without the funding requested, Sacramento will be unable to take advantage of a unique opportunity to utilize these assets. The budget section documents sustainability of this project, utilizing committed assets, a very significant local cash match and BTOP funding. It will pay for itself in less than four years. (Current annual non-discounted connectivity costs are approximately $2.3 million.) There are no ongoing costs for the gigabit fiber infrastructure. Network equipment refresh is planned with associated funding included in the current BESTNET operational structure. The project will extend the existing BESTNET gigabit fiber network from every secondary school in the county to their elementary schools, increasing their ability to collaborate, partner and share media rich content, virtual fieldtrips, video conferencing and distance learning opportunities. Perhaps most significant is the cost savings that will be realized by the completion of BESTNET. These resources will affect and improve service for over 99,225 elementary
students and 6,112 elementary teachers. The project will provide gigabit broadband service to 4 public libraries (providing all the benefits mentioned before), connect the Los Rios Elk Grove Center and provide an additional Internet path for 90,000 students at local community colleges. All of these enhancements will result in major future cost savings and the unique ability to increase bandwidth with minimal costs since the infrastructure provided is dedicated fiber. The BESTNET Phase III project will: ' Provide fiber gigabit service to 189 elementary schools in Sacramento County to allow for increased educational opportunities, collaborations, delivery of media rich content, distance learning, virtual field trips and video conferencing ' Provide an additional broadband connection path for the 4 Sacramento community colleges. ' Provide broadband capabilities and resources for 4 public libraries and their patrons. ' Leverage over a 30% local cash match to maximize use of federal dollars. ' Leverage Comcast's commitment to provide support to BESTNET. ' Provide sustainability due to significant long term cost savings, eliminating the need to secure future Erate and State discounts for data services at elementary schools. ' Provide ability to increase future bandwidth as needed at significantly reduced costs (equipment replacement.) Project Partners: - Sacramento County School Districts at no cost to the grant will provide sustainability through continued network operations, in-kind contributions of network management, engineering, planning and collaboration with BESTNET partners. - Sacramento Educational Cable Consortium, as the educational non-profit corporation holding the BESTNET contract with SMCTC and Comcast, will provide, at no cost to the project, continued partner coordination, organizational oversight and long-term sustainability of BESTNET. - Sacramento Metropolitan Cable Television Commission, a Joint Powers Agreement of Sacramento County and incorporated cities in Sacramento, will provide a $3,000,000 cash match as well as assisting in the sustainability of BESTNET through political and contractual support and, as available, annual operational funding for BESTNET/SECC operations through franchise and PEG fees. - Sonlight Communications, Inc., a partner in BESTNET Phase III development, will provide construction management services. - Los Rios Community Colleges will provide long term support with in-kind contributions of network management, engineering, planning and continued collaborations. - Sacramento County Office of Education, at no cost to the grant, will provide continued management of the core fiber backbone and connectivity to California High Speed Network. - Sacramento Public Library and Folsom Public Library will provide collaboration and opportunity to open BESTNET to the community through access to facilities and 110 public access computers providing broadband resources such as USA Learns (English as a second language instruction for adults), Job Now, Resume Building, job training and Homework Help. - Sacramento Regional Radio Communications System (SRRCS) will provide support with network management and engineering.

Phase III expansion will cover 994 square miles, population 1,433,187. According to Census 2000 and the http://www.fedstats.gov/qf/states/06/06067.html site, there were 453,602 households in 2000 (2009 estimates are 550,000) in Sacramento County and 90,876 firms. Many of the households and firms will benefit from the fiber that is being installed in their neighborhood to reach a school or library. The project will be implemented and managed under the current CIPA requirements for schools, which require filtered Internet access for students while allowing the public libraries to operate under their own light waves without filtering per their current policies. Because this project is an extension of an existing contract that does not allow commercial purposes on the network, it is not technically feasible to meet the interconnection obligation. BESTNET would be in violation of the BESTNET contract. The project will be constructed utilizing dedicated communications fiber (initially 1 wavelength on a single
fiber strand) in conduit or lateral. Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD), the 5th largest district in California, as lead local agency on this project, is uniquely qualified to spearhead this effort. EGUSD has managed many federal grants and is well versed in federal grant administration. As a middle mile project, this project is not specifically intended to increase subscriber counts but it will provide increased bandwidth to 195 underserved sites. The project is estimated to provide jobs through the construction process as crews are hired to deploy and install the network. Based upon federal guidelines (project budget/$92,000 = number of job/years created), the project is estimated to create approximately 94 jobs over the course of the project, with the trickle down effect obviously leading to more. Phase III is estimated to cost less than $9 million including a $3 million match. The value of Phase III is significantly greater due to leveraging a $16 million existing Phase I and II infrastructure, ongoing plant maintenance, as well as providing the one time cost of fiber that can be efficiently upgraded for future needs. Phase III is greatly needed in Sacramento as attested to in the support letters in this application. It is a model network with proven sustainability, political support, ongoing local support and a solid funding base. Without the requested funding, Phase III will not become a reality.