Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: AENEAS COMMUNICATIONS, LLC
Project Title: Aeneas Broadband Adoption Program
Project Type: Sustainable Broadband Adoption

_______________________ Executive Summary_______________________

a) Statement of Need The experience of Aeneas Communications, LLC ("Aeneas") in the West Tennessee market has shown that in the region as a whole, there are few competitive alternatives to the consumer available for broadband services. In addition to lack of exposure, one of the more prohibitive barriers to broadband adoption is the lack of understanding of broadband technology, capabilities, and opportunities. The purpose of the Aeneas adoption application is to compliment Aeneas' Infrastructure Proposal by increasing broadband education, awareness and adoption of new competitive broadband services to West Tennessee. Through a hybrid of traditional awareness campaigns and innovative community-focused approaches, we will stimulate demand and provide opportunities for sustained broadband adoption to underserved customers, businesses, and institutions located in rural West Tennessee. Aeneas will attempt to address the following four primary needs to increase broadband adoption rates. 1) Provide broadband education, awareness, training, access, equipment, and support to anchor institutions, job-creating facilities, and vulnerable populations. 2) Partner with and support community anchor institutions. 3) Improve access to public service agencies. 4) Stimulate demand for broadband.
b) Overall Approach As a local West Tennessee Internet and telephone provider for 15 years, Aeneas uniquely understands the opportunities and challenges of broadband adoption in the underserved rural areas of our community. The methods we propose include traditional advertising: direct mail, door to door sales, newspaper, radio, billboards, yard signs, television and yellow page advertising, as well as non-traditional community based programs. Aeneas has formulated an innovative approach that is targeted to the specific needs of these rural service areas where potential subscribers may not have a sophisticated awareness of what broadband is or may have a distrust of outside companies entering their communities. These methods include: 1) Traditional Advertising to Reach Entire Potential Customer Base. 2) Leveraging our Existing Relationships with Local West TN City and County Governments, School Systems, and Law Enforcement Offices. 3) Partnership with Community Organizers and Chambers of Commerce to Increase Industry. 4) Partnership with Job Creation Programs. 5) Outreach to Medical Centers and Public Health and Safety Organizations such as EMS Centers. 6) Outreach to School Systems and Households with K-12 Students. 7) Community Awareness Events. 8) IT Advocates Working On the Ground in Each Targeted Area. Our method is designed to create a footprint in the area both by engaging potential subscribers one to one, by cultivating the area and our connections with local community leaders, and by a broad range of traditional advertising. c) Areas to be Served The population of our target area is roughly 80,000 people. This population is located in rural west Tennessee in areas underserved by broadband technologies. The area includes both males and females ages 5 through 70. All ethnicities are represented in these areas, of which African-Americans...
represent 20%. The median household income ranges to a high of about $35,000/year. The educational level includes high school and some college. The unemployment rate is 11.1%. There are roughly 26,000 households in this area and roughly 4,000 businesses and institutions which are potential broadband subscribers. d) Qualifications of the Applicant Aeneas has been serving the West TN area since 1995. We have always had a particular interest in providing new technologies to underserved rural areas. Aeneas was the first ISP, and shortly thereafter broadband provider, in rural West TN. In 1999, Aeneas became Tennessee's first and only Tennessee-owned, facilities based Competitive Local Exchange Carrier. And in 2004, Aeneas became the first ISP & VoIP carrier over the largest municipal Fiber to the Home network in the country. Our longevity in a competitive business is our highest qualification, giving us experience with the technologies and the market, as well as with a wide variety of advertising methods available in the area and working relationships with representatives from many advertising companies. As a West TN based company, we also have established relationships with many county governments, law enforcement offices, educational institutions, and local community organizations. We intend to add 4 IT advocates to be located in our target areas, work with targeted strategic institutions and businesses, and develop our relationships with the communities we will be targeting. We already have many advertising materials developed, and we are prepared to start implementing our program and hiring people within 90 days of the approval of this application and our complimentary Infrastructure application. e) Jobs to be Created Aeneas has agreed to provide free Internet access to cTechnology's "Digital Factories." These centers will be in rural communities and will be where telecommuters and other online workers can share a workspace, a connection, and the faculties. In addition, through cTechnology, we are partnering with the local UT Center on Disability and Employment to help create work from home opportunities for the autistic. This is but one part of the 1000+ jobs we conservatively estimate will be created through our deployment. Aeneas will also help to create new jobs and industry by addressing both the lack of affordable high-speed Internet options and the lack of knowledge amongst economic developers about their community's network and broadband capabilities. f) Overall Cost The overall cost of this proposed project is $1,104,500. $525,600 of this budget is dedicated to employee salaries for management and the 4 IT advocates we will be hiring to cultivate the area. $578,900 is dedicated to both traditional advertising and community based events and educational materials.