Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: NEZ PERCE TRIBE

Project Title: Nez Perce Reservation Broadband Enhancement

Project Type: Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

Executive Summary

a) Opportunity the proposed system seeks to address Current access to broadband is limited across the Nez Perce Reservation; providers offering broadband within the Reservation include: Qwest, Verizon, Suddenlink, First Step Internet, QRO of Idaho and the Nez Perce Tribe. The problem this project addresses: within the Reservation fifteen of the twenty-five Census Block Groups' broadband connectivity options are limited to dial up and/or satellite. Deployment of a wireless broadband network is the most effective way to reach the remote places and provide reliable, affordable access to both private and public sector users. The Nez Perce Tribe in partnership with private sector telecommunications providers is proposing to facilitate the delivery of affordable/reliable last mile service options to underserved residents, businesses and critical community institutions as a result of this project.  
b) A general description of the proposed funded service area The Nez Perce Tribe Reservation encompasses 1,203 square miles within north central Idaho and includes four counties (Clearwater, Idaho, Lewis and Nez Perce). Within the Reservation, the Nez Perce Tribe ownership is checkerboard in pattern; in the mid 1800's much of the Reservation was opened for settlement. Today the Nez Perce Tribe and its members hold approximately 750,000 acres (10%) of the land base. Within the Nez Perce Tribe Reservation are twenty-five (25) Census Block Groups, ten (10) incorporated communities, eight (8) unincorporated communities. The majority of resident premises lie outside of the incorporated city limits. US Census 2000 tracts included in the proposed service area include: 9901; parts of 9701; 9702; parts of 9605; 9501; and 9502.  
c) Number of households and businesses According to the 2000 US Census, the Nez Perce Reservation is home to 17,959 persons; there are 7,005 households; and according to Idaho Regional Labor Economist there are 643 employer businesses and 1,886 non employer businesses. This project will target 12,698 people living in the 4,864 households and the 2,428 businesses located in the rural areas, and census block groups outside of incorporated communities that are currently underserved.  
d) Number of community anchor institutions, public safety entities and critical community organizations involved with the project This project will address current connectivity gaps by developing middle mile infrastructure of wireless telecommunication that will reduce identified coverage gaps thus benefiting critical community organization connectivity and enhance public safety. This project will expand the infrastructure capacity and therefore the opportunity for EMS (8 Rural Fire Depts., 4 County Sheriff Depts., ID State Police, and Tribal Police), four (4) libraries, and one (1) community college connectivity to broadband telecommunications Reservation wide.  
e) Proposed services and applications for the proposed funded service area The Nez Perce Tribe will develop a 200Megabit wireless backbone connecting the Reservation communities of Lapwai, Winchester, Culdesac, Lenore, Peck, Ahsahka, Orofino, Nezperce, Kamiah, Kooskia, Stites and the
territories therein in partnership with First Step Internet (and a Round 1 BIP/BTOP applicant) and Washington RSA No 8 Limited Partnership dba Inland Cellular. Service resulting from this project will include: internet, data and cellular communications middle and last mile; and, a disaster recovery center for public and private users across the Nez Perce Tribe Reservation. f) Approach to addressing the non-discrimination and interconnection obligations The Nez Perce Tribe recognizes the value of internet access as a communication tool beneficial to the citizens, businesses and public entities across its boundaries. The service delivery will adhere to FCC 05-151 Internet availability policy established by the Federal Communications Commission, adopted August 2005. By engaging private partners, this project maximizes the current tower and network capacity and expands service delivery range for all across towers developed through this project for the purpose of furthering communications capacity across the Nez Perce Reservation. Memorandums of Understandings between the partners for shared access of existing and proposed infrastructure have been executed. g) Type of broadband system that will be deployed This project will deploy a high bandwidth licensed (200 Megabit) wireless backbone network across the Nez Perce Tribe Reservation. This Wide Area Network (WAN) backbone will utilize Internet Protocol, which uses packet switching, where data is digitized, bundled and transmitted; routers direct the packets to appropriate network locations. Distribution will be done primarily utilizing 900 MHz, 850 MHz (voice), 23, 18 and 11, 4.9 and 2.4 GHz frequencies. h) Qualifications of the applicant that demonstrate the ability to implement and operate a sustainable broadband infrastructure network The Nez Perce Tribe Information Systems program has since 1999 deployed broadband infrastructure networking; first to meet its own governmental needs; and since 2005 has been the infrastructure provider supporting EMS entities in the western sections of the Reservation. Over the past year, the expansion has included providing broadband internet connectivity to users in the Lapwai Valley. The Nez Perce Tribe Information Systems technical staff have an average of fifteen years experience in network establishment and maintenance. Staff are well versed in Ethernet, FastEthernet, GigEthernet and DSL switching, routing and configuration. First Step Internet, LLC began offering dial-up Internet access in 1994 with the idea of making Internet access available to virtually everyone. First Step Internet has matured to being an ISP that services areas in Central Washington and Idaho. The products of First Step Internet has grown to offer includes Accelerated Dial-up, V.92 Technology, Frame Relay, ADSL and Fixed Wireless Internet service. Washington RSA No 8 Limited Partnership provides telephone service in Lenore, Idaho. Doing business as Inland Cellular since 1992, they are a locally operated rural cellular communications company that provides service in Southeastern Washington and North Central Idaho. As the cellular industry has exploded in the last decade and the number of people using cell phones has greatly increased (85% saturation nationally), Inland Cellular has added new towers, advanced technology and services, and staff to be able to keep our commitment to excellence across the rural remote service area which includes the Nez Perce Tribe Reservation. i) Overall infrastructure cost of the broadband system $ 2,282,589 j) Overall expected subscriber projections for the project This project will provide opportunity of broadband internet access to each of the four county governments, rural fire and quick response districts, state and federal partners, residents and businesses across the Nez Perce Reservation. In addition, our partner Inland Cellular will be expanding its cellular voice and data network to reach areas of the Reservation currently unserved. Cellular phone coverage across the Reservation is becoming a critical infrastructure in the public safety arena; major transportation corridors across north central Idaho are limited, east-west US Hwy 12 is the only option and north-south ID 95 is the only
option. Each of these routes has significant sections where cellular coverage does not exist. Use of cellular phones has been on the rise; Inland Cellular has seen growth of 15% in subscribership over the past five years; with expanded coverage to currently unserved areas of the region uptakes rates are projected to reach 60% saturation. In addition, public safety, corporate and individual business uses are expected to rise with the addition of service coverage. At a participation rate by the private sector of thirty-five percent of market share there will be 1,702 households and 224 employer businesses connected to the Nez Perce Tribe broadband network. The enhancement of middle mile infrastructure will also enable private sector service providers with subscribership growth. k) Number of jobs estimated to be created or saved as a result of this project Across the Nez Perce Tribe Reservation there are 642 established employers, who employ 5,927 persons. According to ID Dept of Labor, the top five sectors for growth in employment from 2004-2009 include: chemical manufacturing (200%), finance (181%), telecommunications (169%), education (87%), and sound recording (69%). Over the past year employment in the region has grown 1.1% with the development of a reliable, affordable broadband infrastructure projections are more likely to reach 3% growth, which suggests an additional 200 jobs per year would be generated as a result of the Nez Perce Tribe Broadband program.