

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Sunflower Broadcasting, Inc.

Project Title: Increasing Kansas Broadband Adoption through Marketing, Education and Web Development

Project Type: Sustainable Adoption

Executive Summary

Sunflower Broadcasting, Inc. (SBI) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Schurz Communications, Inc. SBI manages five full-power television stations, including four CBS affiliates: KWCH-Wichita; KSBD-Dodge City; KBSL-Goodland; KBSH-Hays; and a CW affiliate, KSCW – Wichita; we oversee the Univision affiliate, KDCU-Wichita, through joint sales agreement.

To increase the demand for broadband adoption, SBI is proposing to launch an innovative and comprehensive education and marketing campaign that will create eight new jobs. The proposal involves a comprehensive marketing plan that involves producing and airing compelling television and web elements that will educate consumers about the advantages of broadband. More than 28,200 people will also be trained through a series of comprehensive educational seminars across Central, Western and Southeast Kansas. The proposal also includes funds for the creation of a robust, searchable health directory that our research shows will lead to more demand for broadband. The project also provides more than 261 SBA disadvantaged business with web education, training and websites as a part of this proposal. By using the reach and popularity of television – we can significantly grow broadband education and usage across Kansas. This unique approach can lead to significant new broadband subscribers in Kansas - 125,256 individuals and 2,885 businesses. The total cost of the project is \$5,109,860, with a net grant request of \$3,515,860 over a three year period.

SBI will undertake a comprehensive marketing campaign across eight television stations and four websites. (We will partner with the CBS and Fox affiliates in Southeast Kansas.) The marketing campaign will reach a population of 1,719,650 across the viewing area of the television stations and an additional 3,181,200 visitors to the four websites. The viewing area is comprised of 87.8% Caucasian, 3.6% black and 7.9% Hispanic. The viewing area covers ¾ of the state of Kansas, and travels into Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. When 1300 adults in this viewing area were polled, Survey USA Research found that 26% of the respondents said they do not have high speed internet access at home or work. (Survey USA is an independent market based research firm.)

According to Survey USA Research 48% of those surveyed, who do not have broadband at home or work, are unaware or unsure if they are aware of the advantages of broadband. In this same study, 73% reported that they first turn to television for local news and information. These studies indicate that television would be a highly effective way to reach consumers without broadband to educate them on its advantages. The educational effort would also include comprehensive information on-line, so consumers could find information about broadband providers in their areas.

In addition to the marketing campaign, SBI will conduct training seminars across western, central and southeast Kansas. We plan to hold 720 sessions over the three-year period. These sessions would educate Kansans about the internet, web usage and broadband; where appropriate we would include local broadband providers to provide information about their company and services. We would work with established organizations in the communities across Kansas to set up these events. (We have support letters from some of these organizations attached.) We would hold two sessions (one in the evening) in the community and market it on our available channels, as well as using other local mediums such as radio, newspaper and direct mail. The sessions will focus on internet and web usage; the advantages of broadband at home and work; and broadband availability in their communities. This effort will involve four new FTE's – three trainers and one person who will coordinate and plan the events, and assist with local marketing.

Part of our project, would also include helping the 261 disadvantaged businesses in Kansas, by providing web training and web page development. We would create web sites for their businesses, and host them at no charge for one year, and offer deep discounts in the following two years of the project. We have talked to numerous SBA registered disadvantaged businesses that would welcome such assistance.(See attached letters)

Our research has shown there is a demand for local health care information – and this can increase the adoption rates for broadband. Part of our project will focus on creating rich content on the web for health service providers. We will market this information to Kansans as yet another way to encourage broadband adoption. We will have a three person team working on this effort. One person will work directly with health service providers, a second will build the web content, and the third will screen and input data to create a comprehensive directory for Kansas health information, including a searchable database for consumers.

SBI will create a business model that can be easily replicated by other businesses across the country. The innovative nature of using community-based television stations to provide hands-on training, as well as a comprehensive marketing campaign can be easily duplicated across the country.

SBI is a business with a proven track record. It owns and operates dominant CBS affiliates in central and Western Kansas. The company acquired KSCW as a failing station by the FCC, and SBI management has been able to turn the station into a profitable operation. The management of SBI is capable and ready to manage this project.