Conexus Communications is a wholly owned subsidiary of South Alabama Communications. Conexus proposes a project to provide wireless broadband internet service to unserved areas and communities in North Monroe, Southeast Wilcox, North Central Escambia and West Conecuh counties located in southwest Alabama. These areas meet the definition of rural, remote and unserved. The proposed service area includes the towns and communities of: Vredenburgh, Buena Vista, Oak Hill, Pine Apple, McWilliams, Old Texas, Bowles, Lyeffion, Belleville, Appleton and Castleberry. The areas include 6,585 establishments (6,500 residential households, 50 businesses and 35 community anchor institutions) that currently have no access to any broadband service, including no access to Conexus Communications wireless high speed internet service. Without stimulus funding and given the cost-prohibitive nature of building service towers to provide wireless broadband service to these establishments, Conexus Communications has no plans to build a wireless network to provide these unserved establishments with wireless broadband service. This project will stimulate the creation of new jobs and the retention of jobs. Customers subscribing to this wireless broadband service would have the opportunity to access medical, public safety and governmental agencies as well as increasing educational opportunities and access to markets to buy or sell goods and services. The proposed project will rely on Conexus Communications leadership, financial, and technical expertise to meet the following goals: ' Provide wireless broadband capability to 6,585 unserved establishments in rural, remote areas of North Monroe, Southeast Wilcox, West Conecuh and North central Escambia counties in Southwest Alabama at prices comparable to those areas currently served by Conexus Communications. ' Deliver broadband speed capabilities between 1-10 Mbps depending on the specific customer needs. ' Generate sufficient revenues to operate and maintain this broadband network on a self-sustaining basis. ' Directly create or retain 18 jobs to build the network while indirectly stimulation jobs and economic development. ' Allow other providers access to this network so they can also offer these same establishments competing broadband service. Conexus started operations in April of 2006 and currently serves 340 customers in the immediate area of the proposed service area. Conexus operates a wireless network in Monroe and Northern Baldwin counties in Alabama. The existing wireless network consists of 5 sites with the central site located in Monroeville, AL. The Monroeville site houses the main router as well as timing control units and auxiliary battery power. This site serves as the egress connection point, over a 10 meg synchronous circuit, to the World Wide Web. The project proposed here will add 12 sites- a fixed wireless system that uses Motorola's proven Canopy Advantage platform technology. Point to Point connections will be accomplished using Motorola's 5.8 Ghz system. Last mile components will use Motorola's Advantage 3.65Ghz and 900 Mhz platforms. Specific advantages for using Motorola's Canopy
systems include lower cost per customer served. The need for underground cable is eliminated and there is no need for extensive and expensive central offices. Also the Canopy Subscriber modules can be reused if a customer chooses to discontinue the service. A total of 6 personnel will be added at the completion of the build out, one full time customer service clerk and four installer/repairmen and one salesman. Once the system comes on line, Conexus will use the existing infrastructure of South Alabama Communications. South Alabama Communications will supply access to office space, a telephone system, computer & network access, order/repair entry system and billing systems. The cost of access to such systems and support will be passed directly to Conexus at cost. One installer/repairman team can install or repair an average of 6 units / day. When demand activity becomes greater than three business days, Conexus can rely on contract labor from such companies as CMI, Trawick Construction and Computer Support Services to help control install wait times. Upon completion of this project, Conexus Communications will comply with the non-discrimination requirements and interconnection obligations required of all funding applicants as it currently does for provisioning wireless broadband service in other areas of its service territory. Conexus Communications will afford additional providers access to Conexus Communications network at reasonable terms and conditions, allowing them to offer their own competing broadband services and applications to Conexus Communications customers. The cost of deploying broadband to these remote unserved establishments by traditional means (telephone or cable companies) is much higher than with this proposed project. Conexus Communications has the experience in deploying wireless networks in rural and remote areas. Conexus Communications has the capability to ensure that the network is designed and deployed as efficiently as possible in order to maximize consumer benefits.