Broadband USA Applications Database

**Applicant Name:** LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

**Project Title:** Connect My Louisiana

**Project Type:** Public Computer Center

_______________________ Executive Summary _______________________

The LSU AgCenter will utilize its statewide network of Extension offices to provide much needed public access to and education about what is broadband and the benefits of adopting broadband to promote community and regional economic development in five community development areas, including health care, education, entrepreneurship, infrastructure planning and grant writing and acquisition. LSU AgCenter faculty and regional broadband coordinators will provide citizens in Louisiana with online podcasts, brochures and other educational materials organized as short educational courses. This educational outreach plan begins with educating citizens about what is broadband and individual and community benefits of adopting broadband from improving health to accessing grant resources to promote business and overall community development in Louisiana. Citizens will be trained by viewing courses and receiving educational materials when visiting Extension offices located in each parish. Citizens will have greater access to wireless broadband WiFi in Extension offices or they may access LSU AgCenter computers connected to broadband. Regional broadband coordinators will provide guidance about marketing these courses in each region of the state. Educational Content For example, the health care course content will include podcast instruction on how citizens can use the Internet to understand how to establish an exercise and diet plan to improve health using LSU AgCenter nutrition information. Other content will include how to use Internet clearinghouses to understand health promotion and wellness, such as WebMD, accessing information from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, how to find a physician or specialist in their area and identification of hospitals and other health care safety net providers (e.g. community health centers). Educational content will include learning how to use the Internet to review student test scores at schools and other measures of school performance, drop out rates, identify courses and degrees offered at local community colleges, and location of technical school training facilities and programs offered by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System. Entrepreneurship content will include how to start and grow an online business using Facebook, Twitter, Blogger and Wordpress, how to access grants through Louisiana Economic Development and philanthropic organizations, business model development, financial management, and the economics of gaining a web presence for value-added agricultural enterprises such as biofuel-based businesses. Grant writing and acquisition content will demonstrate how federal, state and foundation grants can be accessed to promote economic development efforts across multiple industries including manufacturing, health care, education, and infrastructure development (e.g. Delta Regional Authority). Finally, course content will be organized for infrastructure planning content to include how to use the Internet to connect Louisiana communities to broadband. iCommunity teams will be established in each parish and consist of parish anchor institutional representatives from the Council on Aging, Partners in Prevention,
School Boards, Police Juries, Chambers of Commerce, faith-based non-profit organizations, agricultural cooperatives, police, fire and others who represent community interests. In addition, each organization which receives federal funds for broadband development (BTOP and BIP grantees) will also be invited to participate in these iCommunity teams. This further aligns the ability of iCommunity teams to identify existing resources for broadband development and barriers to adoption. Regional broadband coordinators and LSU AgCenter faculty will lead these iCommunity teams through the development of iCommunity strategic action plans to better connect their communities to broadband by recommending steps that local, state or federal institutions can take to reduce barriers to adoption and increase access to resources. Further, iCommunity teams, one for each parish or 64, will have two representatives who participate in the development of iRegional teams who will aggregate resources and develop similar plans throughout all regions in the state. Each team will have youth representatives who have participated in 4-H. The curriculum to be used for iCommunity and iRegional broadband plans is 'Connecting Rural Communities' produced at the USDA's Southern Rural Development Center, http://srdc.msstate.edu/eccommerce/curricula/connecting_communities/.