Barbed wire is far more prevalent than broadband in our community of Donley County, Texas. Broadband adoption rate for our community is 41.5% (2008 Census) as compared to the national average of 61.7 (2007 Census) and 31.9% (2008 Census) as compared to the National average of 29% without any Internet access. Our plan focuses on improving broadband adoption within our community by addressing the problem of computer literacy. We intend to help our fellow community members understand the value of broadband service by educating them on the many personal and professional opportunities made possible by high speed Internet access. The first part of the project is the computer center. The computer center will provide an equal opportunity for all members of our community to have access to a computer and business applications that have high speed broadband access to the Internet. Because the center is located in our local college library, users will also have access to other knowledge based sources. The center will provide a valuable tool for the following; 1) research via the Internet, 2) business or personal development through the use of business applications installed on the computers, 3) Employment opportunities via the Internet by using resume tools or web employment resources, 4) Educational advancement via online courses. The computer center will also provide a wireless access point for those who prefer to use their own laptop computer. Not only will the center be open to the local community and our college students, but it would also host many travelers that come to our community or who may be passing through. The second part of the project is the learning lab or classroom. The learning lab would be in a different room from the computer center thus preventing any usage conflicts. The lab will allow our college to provide greater computer literacy to our community's adult population via continuing education classes. The lab computers would be used for classes on computer use, literacy, instruction on the latest business applications, Internet search engines, how to complete online resumes, how to use online employment websites and how to use the Internet to help their business, farm or ranch. The lab would also be used for traditional college classes. Both the center and the classroom will be open to all members of the community and our college students. The college library does not currently charge any service or membership fees to anyone nor will we charge anything for the use of the computer center and classroom. The computer center and classroom will serve a predominately poor county in the state of Texas. The median income of Donley County is $35,875, about $15,000 below the state's median income. The largest age groups are those over the age of 65, or 23.3% of the county's population. The other demographics of the county are; 92% are white, 5.8% are black, 1.1% is American Indian, .2% is Asian, 1% or two are more races, and 8.1% are Hispanic or Latino. We are confident in our ability to implement and sustain this project because education is our college's primary goal and we have the necessary staff and infrastructure to support the project well beyond the
expiration date of the grant. Clarendon College has an excellent education service record and will maintain those standards for the computer center. Also, Clarendon College has managed and is currently managing several other grants. Because of two previous grants awarded to the college, Texas TIFF grant 2002 and a Harrington Grant in 2004, they allowed the college to purchase PC systems and offer adult continuing education classes. From these two previous technology grants we have the experience necessary to successfully implement and administer this grant. We estimate it could create 1 job and save 5 others; in a community of 3850 people this is a considerable number. We also believe this project will have a significant impact on our community’s education and employment opportunities. We intend to survey the users of the facilities to track who, why and how they use the center and/or classroom. We will also use an Amseco wireless entry/exit traffic counter to document traffic to and from the computer center. The overall cost for the project would be $145,321. We plan to utilize the college’s current Microsoft Campus agreement to offset our software costs, existing rooms and buildings to offset any new construction costs and its current Internet connectivity to defray any broadband connectivity charges.