Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: CONNEAUTVILLE, BOROUGH OF

Project Title: 20/20 Vision

Project Type: Public Computer Center

_______________________ Executive Summary _______________________

Sustainable living wage prospects affect the overall quality of life for our residents and we propose restoration of our overall economic picture by utilizing the excellent broadband service to our area through modern technology education to create professionals on a career path of upward mobility. The employment opportunities for our post-industrial rural community have declined significantly in the past thirty years due to the dissolution of two major employers. Industrialized employment hubs are minimally a driving distance of 30 minutes with no public transportation available for many poverty level residents. Our efforts are focused on breaking the cycle of chronic generational poverty and decades of learned hopelessness. We propose assisting individuals with the learning capacity for technology-driven education and employment in order to provide family sustaining living wages. Building career opportunities for technology driven employment made possible by broadband will expand broadband adoption rates in a community where purchasing a computer and monthly broadband service fees are deemed superfluous expenses in its present economic condition. Our plan is to facilitate e-commerce in partnership with rural entrepreneurs, artisans, the Amish population ' many of which are locally successful entrepreneurs prohibited by religious conventions from direct use of the internet ' and rural cottage industries in expansion to markets beyond the limitations of rural geography. We propose to train our workforce to take full advantage of the growth opportunities in marketing and sales available through broadband service to the world beyond our geographic locale. On-the-job work experience as well as a developmental curriculum would be designed using online W3 schools, hands-on web-based learning and an Advising Board of individuals committed to our proposal and employed in the technology and Information Systems field. -Mr. James Flavin, Co-Founder, Project Hosts, a Gold Certified Microsoft partner Conneautville, PA -Mr. Philip Reinhart, Computing Services, Allegheny College, Meadville, PA -Mr. Doug Varee, Computing Services, Allegheny College, Meadville, PA -Mr. Jeremy Shelatz, Information Systems Manager, Industrial Sales and Manufacturing, Inc., Erie, PA -Ms. Maureen McBride, Owner, Indy Pen Dance Communications Consulting, LLC, Conneautville, PA -Ms. Kathy Comp, Planning Commission Chairman and Career Service Advisor, Conneautville, PA We propose becoming a workforce training provider for an extensive scope of occupations including MicroSoft Certification classes. The utilization of Career Services on-line testing and instruction for employment will conclude the educational progression for those who have committed to the program of learning proposed for this Public Computer Center. The hours of operation for the Public Computer Center would provide for the general public who desire to participate in a question and answer session on how broadband service can simplify job searching, make more efficient use of time with personal business and communication and understanding of the Information Age while utilizing a computer for hands-on learning. Although the
Public Library System has offered computer access to communities fortunate enough to have funding, librarians are not always available to answer questions and teach the scope of opportunity broadband provides to their library constituents. We have nearly 900 borough residents within walking distance of the Center. Due to lack of public transportation for our area, many of the borough citizens will walk to the Public Computer Center. Demographic information indicates there are nearly 4,000 constituents served in our zip code area of 16406. There are an additional 6,000 in the broader 164 zip code area. We have 370 students attending the local secondary school with limited technology classroom space. After the establishment of the Ning API social networking site and an initial training session in the technology classroom at the local high school, membership on the site grew fivefold in four months. Current membership numbers represent approximately 25% of the local adult population and interest continues to build. Requests have been made for additional training sessions and we are limited by accessibility to the local high school technology classroom. Demonstrating full commitment to technology based opportunities a Web 2.0 SEO e-commerce web site has been funded through the efforts of the Borough of Conneautville's Planning Commission. Additionally, through donated services in the past six months we have established a baseline communications system employing a Ning API social networking website in lieu of a printed newspaper. This hometown branded social networking site is fostering communications related to all aspects of community life. School activities, fraternal organizations, fundraising efforts and church groups are all actively employing this online tool. As indicated above, following an initial training session in the technology classroom at the local high school, membership on the site grew fivefold in four months. Current membership numbers represent approximately 25% of the local adult population. Our Advisory Board includes a hands-on commitment from a local entrepreneur operating a Microsoft Gold partnership generating 2.8 million dollars through the advantage of local excellence in broadband usage ' see Project Hosts at www.projecthosts.com. We are interested in avoiding a paternalistic and often passive approach to poverty alleviation for our citizenry. A welfare to work situation providing education in a growing field provides hope through development and improvement. Creating authentic advancement opportunities for individuals who have endured generational poverty for decades will initiate a new business age for our community. As we develop our workforce, our client base will be limited only by our and their ambitions for success and change, organizational capacities and competitive service value position in a visibly growing market.