Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: HOOPA VALLEY TRIBAL COUNCIL

Project Title: Hoopa Public Computer and Economic Development Center

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Executive Summary

Hoopa Valley Tribe is experiencing an economic calamity. The US economic recession has driven housing construction and in turn timber prices into historic lows with the result being a reduction of $5 million a year in discretionary revenues to the Tribe, increasing already high unemployment rates, and reducing local incomes. The timber industry in northern California is in a state of serious decline that will not end in years or perhaps decades. Timber prices are not expected to return to previous levels for years. Timber operations should not continue to form the foundation of the Reservation’s economy given increased logging costs as the best and most easily accessed timber has already been logged. The Reservation must transition to a new economy that will support the local population and will improve access to employment, education, and quality of life. The failure to move to a new economic model will increase the current dire circumstances. A continued lack of sustainable economic resources on the Reservation could result in a substantial number of local residents becoming economic wards of the state and federal government. It is for these reasons that a model must be developed for the new local economy and resources must be put in place to support and grow the new economy. We believe the single greatest enabling resource we could provide on the Reservation is broadband infrastructure, with the directive to leverage any implementation to have maximum effect upon education, vocational training, and facilitating economic opportunity. This public computer center would provide such a resource. While it is still not totally clear what this new economy will look like, the basic precepts and requirements are becoming evident: 1. Small business development. Since it is unlikely that any large business or industry will arrive on the Reservation in the near future, it will be necessary for small businesses to replace the declines in the timber industry. This will require substantial support for the generation of small businesses and the incorporation of state-of-the-art technology into small businesses. 2. New (outside) sources of revenues. The revenue streams that exist within the boundaries of the Reservation are insufficient to support the local economy with the decline in timber. It is therefore necessary to create outside sources of revenue. These sources of revenue cannot be created without broadband infrastructure which does not currently exist and without adequate educational resources to understand and utilize new broadband resources. 3. Keeping revenues local. Currently most local income is spent off-Reservation for goods and services only available in urban areas 50-100 miles away. Small business development efforts must target the generation of the businesses most suitable to keeping revenues local. 4. Local ownership of utilities. It is now possible with the advance of technology and deregulation to have local ownership of Internet, telephone, television and power providers. Local ownership would again keep significant revenues in the community. 5. Focus on education. With the proliferation of broadband, there will be many new economic opportunities, but
only for those with the resources and skills to access them. A focus on affordable, local education provided through new broadband resources is essential. 6. Focus on individuals. Lacking large sums of investment capital, it is necessary to bring the economic focus down to the individual, making available the educational and economic opportunities necessary for each to control his or her economic destiny. 7. New technology business opportunities. The list of new potential businesses in the benefiting from new technology offered through broadband is growing rapidly: a. Telecommuting. Broadband resources will allow a new stream of revenues to come to the Reservation. b. Video production. The creation of a Reservation intranet will provide myriad video production opportunities, such as local news, community interest videos produced by students from local schools, and live broadcast of local sports events. Learning how to produce video content not only creates extremely marketable skills, it produces a potentially significant revenue stream. c. Manufacturing. Broadband-enabled technology will promote locally owned small business outsourced manufacturing. An individual can now invent, design (using Blender or Google's SketchUp to produce a 3-D design), prototype (using a desktop 3-D printer like MakerBot selling for less than $1,000), manufacture (outsourcing to China, Mexico, etc.), and sell through the Internet (e.g. SparkFun, Web Studio, Maker Faire) without a large investment in anything other than the time to learn how to use these important new resources. Source: Wired Magazine "Atoms are the New Bits", Feb 2010. Manufacturing. d. Animation and graphic design. The same design programs mentioned for manufacturing above can be used to produce anything from graphics to movies. This PCC and its programs are crucial to the economic viability of the Tribe. It is unlikely that the Reservation economy can be adequately developed in a short period of time without this resource. The Approach to Solving the Problem Our approach has three facets. One is to build awareness of the boundless opportunities provided by broadband access. The second is to build the skills and knowledge necessary to access those opportunities. The third is to focus on those technologies (such as video production and individual-driven manufacturing) that can most immediately produce positive economic benefits. Our solution includes improvements in resources at 2 local libraries, one of which is a 2007 Institute of Museum and Library Science gold medal winner, as well as the construction of a new facility with the following components: 1. Computer rooms. Two computer rooms with 32 computers each. One room can be used for classes. 2. Supporting the Tribe’s After-School Program, located next door, for 15-20 children. 3. Small business incubation. The PCC will provide administrative, accounting, technology, marketing, and legal (limited to business formation) support to existing and new small businesses. 4. Web site creation and support. The PCC will assist Reservation residents with the creation and maintenance of web sites. 5. Website hosting. The computer center will host web sites for Reservation businesses. Monthly fees will be waived or reduced based on need. 6. Job software. The PCC will offer access to an array of software and web sites that improve job skills. 7. Video production capability. Hardware and software to allow students and adults to develop basic video production skills and experience. 8. Manufacturing resources. Design software and 3-D printers to introduce students and adults to opportunities in individualized manufacturing, utilizing computer and web-based resources. 9. Generalized computer software/hardware. The computer center will offer a complete set of the standard types of software and hardware necessary to perform most computer tasks. 10. Internet access. High-speed internet access will be offered to support the educational and job creation goals of the center. 11. Entertainment. Providing entertainment software will generate interest in computer activities. Experience has demonstrated that initial entertainment-focused computing leads to a
sustained interest in computing and higher computing skills levels. Demographics Proposal addresses Hoopa Valley Reservation, a 12x12-mile square in northern California. It is expected that students and adults from nearby areas will also use the resources this center would provide. The Reservation population is approximately 4000 persons " 3700, U.S. Census 2007 projection " 86.7% Native American, 11.9% White, 3.4% Other Average Life Expectancy (2007): 64.9 years High School Graduation (2002): 81.5% Tribal Members (includes GED) Persons Living Below Poverty Level (1999): Families 44%, Individuals 32.3% Residents with no transportation: 14% No telephone: 16.2% Wood Heated Homes: 65.3% Hoopa Unemployment rates: 40-55%, Bureau of Indian Affairs 2004-07 2000 Census Data Humboldt County California Hoopa Per Capita Income $17,203 $22,711 $10,400 Median Family Income $39,370 $53,025 $26,477 Estimated number of users: 2700 Applicant Qualifications Hoopa Valley Tribe is the 3rd largest government in northern California with revenues and expenditures in the tens of millions of dollars. The Tribe has extensive experience with managing federal assistance, including significant construction type awards. Additionally, the management implementation team includes an individual who owned a successful computer education and entertainment center in a nearby coastal city for a number of years. Jobs to be Created: 16 Cost of the Project: $1,501,938 (federal)