Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: KAWERAK INC

Project Title: Kawerak’s Public Access Wireless System (PAWS)

Project Type: Public Computer Center

_______________________ Executive Summary _______________________


A. Problem Nome Alaska is the hub community to the 15 Bering Strait villages in Kawerak’s service area. These 15 surrounding villages are extremely rural and remote. While the hub community of Nome has access to acceptable broadband services, the available Internet connectivity in the surrounding villages is unreliable and slow. There are no roads connecting any of these villages to regional hubs or urban areas. Consequently, there is no terrestrial telecommunications infrastructure. Voice and data communications take place over an aging, expensive, carrier-owned satellite network. Advertised speeds are only 256 kbps download and 56 kbps upload, well below conventional broadband speeds. Both residential and commercial internet outages can last for days. During phone/internet outages, entire communities can be cut off from the world. B. Approach Kawerak seeks to expand public access to broadband at 16 rural village sites (2 locations in Teller) in the Bering Strait region that currently lack broadband services. Kawerak is proposing to set up broadband connectivity for vital community service entities in all 15 communities. This connectivity would support community services such as the tribal offices, Indian Child Welfare workers, Head Start, transportation staff, general assistance, job training programs as well as provide connectivity to state-funded Village Public Safety Officer, which are the only local law enforcement responders in most of the 15 communities. Kawerak seeks to provide the 3 tribal offices in Nome which already have access to acceptable broadband speeds, new public computer center equipment to replace the current equipment which is reaching the end of its useful life. Summary of Project Objectives: 1. Expand public access to broadband 2. Provide broadband access to tribal offices 3. Provide broadband access to Village Public Safety Officers (VPSOs) 4. Provide broadband to other vital community service organizations 5. Stimulate the demand for broadband and stimulate economic development Proposed Service offerings and type of system to be deployed: Equipment upgrades to allow satellite broadband access to vital community anchor institutions, public safety staff and public computer centers. Kawerak is proposing to deploy one satellite earth station at one central hub location in each village. Other locations in each village would be connected back to their central hub location using point-to-point wireless connections. C. Areas to be served The proposed service area is: The Bering Strait region of Northwest Alaska which is both rural, and remote, containing the hub community of Nome and fifteen surrounding villages. The region covers 26,000 square miles and has a total population of about 9,200, which is 75% Alaska Native. Number of Households in the Region: 2693 Number of Businesses in the Region: Nome - 253, Surrounding Villages - 116 Number of Community Anchor Institutions in the region: Nome Public Schools- 4, Bering Strait School District - 16, Public Libraries - 7, Hospitals and Clinics - 16, Colleges - 1, Tribal Offices - 20 Public Safety Entities in the Region: FAA - 1, National Guard - 16, EMT/Ambulance - 2, VPSO/VPO public safety - 16, Fire public safety - 16, Volunteer
Search and Rescue - 16 ’ Critical Community Organizations Involved in the Project: Public Safety - 11,
Health or Social programs - 15, Educational Programs - 12, Tribal Governments - 15 D. Qualifications
Kawerak, Inc. is the non-profit arm of the Bering Straits Native Association, which was formed to
advocate for settlement of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Kawerak serves the 20
tribes living in 16 communities located in the Bering Strait in Northwest Alaska and administers over
$33,140,000 in state, federal and other contracts through its programs. E. Jobs saved or created ' 8.7
direct jobs ' 8.7 indirect jobs ' 10.8 induced jobs F. Total cost This application is requesting a total of
$806,591.78 for the project, and Kawerak is providing a match of $276,342.68 broken down as follows: '
$742,001.78 BTOP Funding - year 1 ' $225,164.15 Kawerak Matching Funds - year 1 ' $64,590.00 BTOP
Funding - year 2 ' $51,178.53 Kawerak Matching Funds - year