Applicant Name: FIREBAUGH, CITY OF

Project Title: City of Firebaugh and Rural Anchor Partners Expanding Technology through Public Community Centers

Project Type: Public Computer Center

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The Firebaugh Partners project will expand broadband capacity and establish 6 rural Computer Centers and technology education programs in Congressional District 20, the poorest district in the nation, identified as Western Appalachia. Nowhere in the country is this more evident than on the west side of CA’s Central Valley, with per capita income rates of less than half the state average and one-third the national average. The project will partner with 2 rural community colleges, 15 schools, the County Office of Education, 5 rural libraries, 3 cities & 1 CBO. New computer centers will be sustained by the colleges. Technology education will be delivered over broadband-expanded services by 2 educational enrichment small businesses and one public education partner. This project is located in a state designated 'Enterprise Zone.' The Firebaugh Partners project will create 6 new computer technology centers and up-grade several existing centers in 7 rural, isolated communities allowing access to GED preparation and college classes. These communities are 50 to 98% limited English speaking Hispanics, with unemployment rates between 30% to 41% (CA EDD, December, 2009) and poverty rates in our rural cities range as high as 24% according to PUMA survey http://www.workforce3one.org/view

PROJECT SERVICES include: 'Outreach to 12 rural communities and 100,000 residents with information about new educational services, training and internet accessibility 'Educational Opportunities include: GED Preparation training for adults in each community offered in English and Spanish, Computer Literacy classes with the goal of providing each family with a computer to use in their homes 'Job skills training provided at these centers that will prepare local residents for new regional jobs in solar, logistics, food manufacturing and green construction 'Computer give-away of 1500 refurbished computers to families who participate in the computer literacy training to be offered at the new community technology centers '15,000 high school and middle school students will have access to 3 exceptional internet delivered instructional programs. The Bridge Program uses technology to prepare students for their high school exist exam and college entrance tests. The ACME program introduces digit animation as a way to encourage student interest in technology and Gen Yes works with teachers and youth to institutionalize technology into classroom instruction and usage. 'Creating 6 new technology centers operated by the college and refurbish several existing centers to provide staff and training in GED, computer literacy and job skills. AREAS TO BE SERVED Rural Central California Cities of Firebaugh, Mendota, Dos Palos, San Joaquin, Tranquility, Huron, 5 Points, Coalinga, Avenal, Riverdale, Corcoran and Coalinga- many are 100% Title 1 eligible schools, some are listed as the poorest towns in California and all do not have broadband capacity to utilize the internet and technology available to most of America. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE APPLICANT AND ANCHOR PARTNERS: ‘The city of Firebaugh is
the only rural community in this area to attract millions of dollars in federal projects and 3 new international businesses. This city has a progressive city manager, Jos' Antonio Ramirez. 'Their partner, West Hills Community College District, will serve as the fiscal agent and has an experienced business office and a grants management team capable of providing support and infrastructure to the project. The community college will sustain the centers at the close of the grant and provide GED, computer literacy and job skills training. 'The Fresno County rural libraries will provide facilities for additional computers and is a partner in Firebaugh creating a joint use Community College/Library facility to be built in 2011. 'The Fresno County Office of Education will provide broadband access to each rural school district partner, connecting middle and high schools to broadband services. Currently, there is not enough bandwidth to offer ANY student services. This partner will make microwave connectivity available to government offices and libraries. 'The Bridge Program is a CA instructional initiative that utilizes technology to support student academic achievement and is demonstrating higher graduation exit exam pass rates in schools utilizing this approach 'GenYes is training teachers and students nationwide on integrating technology into classroom instruction 'ACME is engaging students across southern CA utilizing animation and potential jobs to generate enthusiasm for technology and is willing to expand services into central California 'The Westside Institute of Technology is active in job training, employer outreach and job placement for rule adults and will aid in the job skills training component using their funds. 'Westside Tule Enterprise Community will provide facilities for farm laborers JOBS TO BE SAVED AND CREATED 60 jobs will be necessary to implement this project and 500 jobs will be created through new employers coming to our region. In the last month alone 100 new jobs have been identified by our local Workforce Development Partners. Three new solar farms in this region will be built in the next 18 months and are through the permitting process. New Green employers are anticipating hiring up to 100 solar installers and 15 to 20 solar maintenance staff at each facility. Three new international agricultural manufacturing businesses have located in this area and will be hiring 200 workers and a federal prison will open in 2011, hiring 150 employees. FEDERAL REQUESTED FUNDS $4,199,998 MATCH $1,259,999