Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name:   PORT OF ALLYN

Project Title:   Computer Center North Mason

Project Type:   Public Computer Center

_______________________________ Executive Summary ______________________________

The Port of Allyn is a Special Purpose district whose primary role is economic development. It covers the north end of Mason County which is considered a distressed rural area, and includes the two small unincorporated towns. The nearest cities are Bremerton and Shelton both of which are 20 miles away. The population in the Port district is 10,000. The unemployment rate in Mason County is at 12.2% and per capita income is $43,989 which is 16% below the statewide average. In 2009 the Hispanic population was 15.1%, and 17.9% of the population reported speaking a language other than English in their homes. In a regional economic development study of the Olympic Peninsula a major need cited by employers was lack of a trained work force. All of these factors indicate a need for access to resources to learn English, and many other educational opportunities. We will set up a community computer center in our Administrative Building to provide broadband access for individual computer work stations and teleconferencing. In addition to distance learning opportunities for individuals, we will be able to provide televised classes from any participating college, educational facility. On-line testing and certification opportunities for various trades so they don't have to take half a day to drive to Tacoma, Seattle or Olympia for testing. It can also provide training to improve job skills for those in the work force to enhance their chance of promotion to better paying positions and increase the employability of those with language or disability barriers. The equipment will be available for use by local fire & emergency agencies. Ultimately help decrease unemployment and improve the economy in this area. We will work with various agencies including Olympic College in Shelton, the Washington Sea Grant Program through the University of Washington Fire District 5, Mason County Economic Development council, Hood Canal Communications, Public Utility District No 3 which operates the NOAH fiber network throughout Mason County and regional Small Business Administration offices. The request is for $20,000 total and this will cover only the cost of equipment and set up. We will provide $10,000 in supplies, technical support, outreach materials, coordination and management. We anticipate that we can serve approximately 250 people per year at this center through individual and class activities. The center will meet ADA guidelines