Broadband USA Applications Database

**Applicant Name:**  NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

**Project Title:**  A Carrier Independent Fiber-Optic Backbone Infrastructure Network

**Project Type:**  Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

--------------- Executive Summary ---------------

Broadband connectivity is the economic development tool of the 21st century. As a geographic region moves forward to develop an economic development strategy for the retention and recruitment of jobs, it will be necessary for broadband connectivity. This project is designed to establish an approximate 250-mile build out of a fiber-optic carrier independent telecommunication infrastructure network. This network will connect the six rural counties of Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean and Potter located in north central Pennsylvania. The project will encompass 5,091.5 square miles with a population base of 225,166 establishing a density of 42.2 persons per square mile. None of the 256 municipalities has a population that exceeds 14,000 people and the aggregate number of households in the project area is 92,778, which also has 3,456 current businesses operating. The number of community anchor institutions passed and/or involved in the project will be 99 with a priority on health care and county government. The purpose of the project is to leverage and promote the necessary financial resources and community partnerships to construct a fiber-optic backbone that will provide the necessary foundation for the infrastructure to establish high speed internet connectivity. The network will be established as a carrier independent system owned by North Central Enterprise, Inc. and operated in partnership with a third party telecom provider. With an open-access framework approach those telecoms that elect to provide high speed internet service will have that opportunity. Additional linkage would be the co-location of the Commonwealth’s telecommunication network for schools and emergency communications. North Central initiated internet services in 1995 for the six counties they serve. The focus has been on public service, education, emergency management, health care and law enforcement. The current connection types include DSL, dial-up, POP microwave, wi-fi and limited fiber. The services include email, spam/antivirus protection, web page hosting, bandwidth and usage monitoring, VPN’s, videoconferencing and serve co-location. This project when completed will provide a minimum of 48 strands of fiber ring technology to enable world class access for digital voice, virtual PBX, backhauling, data backup/storage and ultra high speed internet with point-to-point optical data connections. The cost of the project is $3,850,000 with a request from NTIA of $2,400,000. A break-out of county-by-county cost is attached. The match of $1,450,000 will be provided from $450,000 by the applicant and $1,000,000 from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The estimated number of jobs created as a result of the project is 250 and 450 is the estimated numbers of jobs that could be saved.