Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name:  DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Project Title:  Shreveport Sustainable Broadband Community Connection Initiative

Project Type:  Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

_______________________ Executive Summary_______________________

The purpose of this project is to leverage a myriad of existing assets and infrastructure within the entire north Louisiana region, which includes (but is not limited to) the $100 million Cyber Innovation Center, the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (which just received $80 million of BTOP funding through the Louisiana Board of Regents), the multi-million dollar biomedical research facility located at the LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport, the extensive training and research in digital media technology and cyber security being conducted at all of our regional institutes of higher learning (Bossier Parish Community College, Southern University, Centenary College, LSU at Shreveport, and Louisiana Tech University).

By using a public/private partnership approach linking area colleges, economic development organizations, private employers, internet service providers, community organizations and local governments, the project will provide new or substantially upgraded broadband internet service to community anchor institutions, including public safety officials, educational institutions, economic development agencies, and employers, with the potential to greatly expand technology-related employment and commerce in our region.

The service area for this project will be the community core of Shreveport, Louisiana, which includes the downtown business district along with several surrounding residential communities. The goal is to use the BTOP grant to fund and demonstrate Phase 1 of this project with multiple phases to follow eventually leading to a city-wide and region-wide network.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the 2006 total population for Shreveport was 200,199, and 2000 census reported 86,802 total housing units with 78,662 households. The unemployment rate for Shreveport is 5.9%, and the per capita income is $21,421 with a median income of $22,846. 23.6% of the total population of Shreveport lives below the poverty line.

The first phase of the Shreveport Sustainable Broadband Community Connection Initiative will impact an estimated 50,000 people in the city, 10,000 households, 1,000 businesses, and 50 federal, state, and local anchor institutions providing a fiberoptic middle mile system combined with a wireless middle/last mile network. This hybrid system will be designed, constructed, and operated by industry professionals with several local providers prepared to bid competitively for the project once funded.
The completed network will be utilized for a multitude of broadband related activities, which will include a community broadband training initiative, a dedicated and secure public safety network to be used by federal, state, and local officials, a health and telemedicine program, and an economic inducement program. In order to ensure an equitable deployment of this network, all the services will be made available at no cost to the end user for the first 2 years of operations with a rate schedule to be established by the City of Shreveport and its private operator at the end of this term to ensure the sustainability of the infrastructure.

Phase 1 total estimated cost is $25 million with $16 million coming from the BTOP funding and $9 million coming from local matching funds provided by both public and private partners. The project will be completed in 18 months, and it will create a total of 200 jobs and retain 50 existing jobs.