

MS Valley State University (MVSU), a Historically Black College/University (HBCU) located in the MS Delta, has assembled a world-class team of experienced companies called “Team Delta” to provide state-of-the-art, high-speed, reliable Broadband access to the residential and business communities that reside in the severely underserved and rural Delta region in the State of MS.

The median income level in the Delta Region stands at only \$27,339 annually. A U.S. Census report dated March 5, 2008, stated that MS had the 3rd highest poverty rate in the country. NTIA/US Census data, cited only 24.9% of households with income levels between \$25,000-\$34,999 had Internet access and less than 30% of the households in the Delta, have broadband access. *Experts agree that there is a strong relationship between lack of broadband and the income and population density of a state.*

Our proposed Mississippi Delta Broadband Expansion Project (MDBEP) will transform the Delta, economically and psychologically. Team Delta will provide access to affordable broadband services, access to advance training opportunities, remote school-to-school learning capabilities, tele-health/medical collaborations, attract business-to-business opportunities, spur economic development growth strategies, and most importantly, create thousands of new highly technical employment opportunities - immediately and well into the future.

As Team Delta prepared to work on this project, we met with, listened to, the true stakeholders; the MS Delta community-at-large. Team Delta held meetings on the campus of MVSU; with local mayors and other elected officials, representatives from the institutions of higher learning, Directors of Head Start programs, school board members, K – 12 teachers, students, medical professionals, seniors, students, community center directors, and Network/Broadband experts. We have incorporated many of their inputs into our grant proposal.

The MDBEP meets 4 out of the 5 statutory goals set forth under the BTOP Program. Our project will provide improved high-speed-next-generation broadband access to community anchor institutions, businesses, and consumers residing in all 18 Counties, via a last and middle mile fixed terrestrial wireless system. The MDBEP will specifically target the following 18 counties that make up the impoverished and underserved MS Delta region: Washington, Jefferson, Humphreys, Carroll, Issaquena, Panola, Quitman, Bolivar, Coahoma, Leflore, Sunflower, Sharkey, Tunica, Tallahatchie, Holmes, Warren, Claiborne, and Yazoo. Team Delta’s target area has a population of approximately 397,823 (2000 US Census data) 167,561 households (2000 US Census data) and 7,484 non-farm businesses (2000 US Census data). Households –24.9% or 41,710 households currently have high-speed internet installed. We have targeted 50% of this 24.9% with a low-end offer (\$9.99) at speeds of 2Mbps down-1Mbps up. Lower price and consistent QoS = effective capture estimates. Businesses –40% or 2,994 businesses are targeted. Our low cost entry-level business broadband service is \$150/month @ 3Mbps symmetrical transmission speeds.

Team Delta has assembled a growing list of community anchor institutions, public safety entities, and critical community organizations within our broadband reach. They include: 16 public safety entities; 17 primary healthcare facilities; 18 public libraries; 18 high school; 6 court houses; and 8 community centers to name a few. Specifically we have collaborative partnerships with the following programs: Delta Health Alliance, a Tele-medicine/Tele-health partnership. Delta Health Alliance, a federally funded program, founded in 2001 to support community-based healthcare initiatives that target critical health and wellness in the MS Delta. The Delta Health Alliance functions by coordinating the delivery of healthcare programs that can be accessed by rural communities, providing targeted education and training to facilitate consistency across

providers, and facilitating research to replicate evidence-based healthcare programs that work. This partnership with The Delta Health Alliance is critical because our MBEP will have a significant impact on the level of telemedicine offerings in the region and will greatly enhance the bandwidth capacity of the more than 50 hospitals, rural clinics and universities in the Delta.

The MS Head Start Association, a federally funded program, manages 57 Head Start Program sites in the 18-county Delta region. Our project plans to provide improved broadband access to consumers, including to the 57 Head Start sites, residing in the Delta via a last mile fixed terrestrial wireless system. Our Project has also partnered with The MS Head Start Association to strategically position our *Digital Delta Distance Learning Centers* at 18 Head Start sites in the Delta. Our MBEP has also formed partnerships with every college and university in the region, including Delta State University, MS Delta Community College and Coahoma Community College. Together we will bring 21st Century Learning Tools and Programs, enhanced Research and Development capacity and Distance Learning Offerings to the Delta region. Bipartisan support has been received from U.S. Congressman Benny Thompson, Chairman of the Congressional Homeland Security Committee, U.S. Senator Roger Wicker, The MS Conference of Black Mayors, composed of 65 Mayors and The MS State Senate.

Team Delta's Wireless Integrated Broadband Optical Network (WiBON) is designed to support net neutrality as defined and mandated by the FCC, by agreeing to not favor any lawful Internet applications and content over others, connect to the public Internet directly or indirectly, and offer interconnection, where technically feasible without exceeding current or reasonably anticipated capacity limitations, at reasonable rates and terms. We will display our network management policies prominently on our web page and advise customers of changes to policies. We will adhere to the Net neutrality policies. To the extent technically feasible, each customer will treat its own operation on a nondiscriminatory basis in relation to the technical and operational quality of services provided (including, but not limited to, quality, availability and time of provision). Finally, we will treat the prospective common carriers on a non-discriminatory basis.

The foundation of goal is to build a wireless carrier Ethernet network that uses existing cell towers, buildings and other municipal structures. Team Delta will build a next generation (4G) wireless broadband network that supports a three-tier service model. The first service tier supports local 3G carrier client/partners with alternative backhaul services and gives them the ability to test 4G service offerings. The second service tier supports wholesale or retail business-to-business service offerings. The third service tier directly supports the consumer residential market. The lack of fiber optics in the heart of the MS Delta and high capacity copper facilities, i.e. DS3 connections to cell sites in rural areas makes deploying 3G services difficult. Our assessment indicates that only a Wireless Carrier Ethernet broadband design that can deliver the abovementioned criteria.

Team Delta's has partnered primarily with KDL, a regional provider of wholesale fiber-optic transport services with a fiber network that spans nearly 30,000 miles and reaches into 26 states, including MS, and CISCO Systems. CISCO Systems, the world's largest network solutions company, is supporting this effort with a Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) model of deployment. Initial staffing of our Network Operations Center (NOC) for the first two years of operations, will be also managed by CISCO. Because we will deploy a CISCO powered network, we will employ the services of Cisco Networking Academy to train Delta citizens to assume technical jobs required to maintain and manage the network once transition operations from CISCO personnel to UABD, Team Delta's long term operator of the network. ComSource, an

International Telecommunications Engineering Firm, has skill sets, which include major IT network deployments and large scale wireless network rollouts. ComSource has also designed and deployed hundreds of carrier class networks worldwide. Dynis, a Small Disadvantaged Business, a world-class provider of technology services, specializes in critical voice, data and IT solutions. Dynis provides technical services for over 290 major central offices, Points of Presence Sites and Data Centers for major clients such as Verizon.

Team Delta's overall infrastructure cost for our state-of-the-art, high-speed broadband network is \$124,964,733.

The overall number of projected Broadband subscribers that will be secured as a result of our MS Delta Broadband Expansion Project is as follows: Year 1: 0, Year 2: 6 institutional customers (2 colleges & 4 universities), Year 3: 4,966 subscribers, Year 4: 9,921 subscribers, Year 5: 17,863. The central economic development objective of our Delta Broadband Expansion Project is to ensure that rural businesses, government, healthcare, education and non-profit institutions gain access to an advanced Broadband infrastructure.

The total number of jobs that the MS Delta Broadband Expansion Project will create based on a total project cost of \$124,964,733; is more than 10,000. A 2003 Broadband Economic Impact Analysis Study by Criterion Economics, LLC, reported that for every one million dollars of broadband investment, 18 new jobs are created. Job creation is a key component of our project. A report issued in 2008 by the Governor of MS's Special Task Force for the Revitalization of the Delta, unemployment in the 18-county region is almost 10%. Delta residents between the ages of 18 and 64 who *are not working* is nearly 50%, compared to the state of MS, at 29.0 percent. Broadband NOW is the solution for the Delta!