

STATE OF COLORADO

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Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

April 30, 2010

Ian Martinez
Senior Advisor and Director of Outreach
BTOP Program
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Department of Commerce

Dear Mr. Martinez:

The expansion of broadband internet access across Colorado has been a state development priority for the last decade, however, our diverse geography and current economic realities have hindered our ability provide sufficient high-speed internet access to meet current demand. The Broadband Technology Opportunity Program provides an opportunity for our state's businesses and public sector entities to expand high-speed internet access to new and underserved communities, revitalizing neighborhoods and remote municipalities, creating new economic opportunities, and helping Colorado continue to span geographic and socioeconomic obstacles.

In making our recommendations for BTOP applications a team was assembled comprised of State Executive Directors, technology experts and senior policy advisors. This team carefully deliberated on our priorities with careful consideration to the guidance set forth by NTIA for round two as well as the priorities established by the Colorado Governor's Office of Information Technology. Our Round Two recommendations emphasize applications that contain strong community partnerships, 20% in matching funds and a plan for long-term sustainability. Other Colorado priorities for Round Two include:

Emphasis for Comprehensive Community Infrastructure applications:

- Focus on providing broadband services to one or more community anchor institutions currently without access to broadband services and not already covered by a binding, legally-enforceable commitment to provide broadband by the end 2010
- Use infrastructure to maximize the impact of financial investments

- Enhance the speed or other aspects of broadband services performance to areas which currently have no service or only lower-quality service

Public Computer Centers:

- Maximize accessibility through increasing the number of computers available or the number of people who can access the site
- Use infrastructure to maximize the impact of financial investments
- Enhance the speed or other aspects of broadband services performance to areas which currently have no service or only lower-quality services

The goals of the BTOP program are vital to maintaining a competitive, educated and interconnected population in the United States, and Colorado is proud to have the opportunity to submit applications as part of this important broadband development program. The applications listed below represent our top priorities, and I ask that you please review them with careful consideration.

Sincerely,



Bill Ritter, Jr.
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Highly Recommended Applications (3):

Applicant Name: Centennial Board of Cooperative Education Services

Project Title: Colorado Community Anchors Broadband Consortium – Connecting Colorado’s Middle Mile

Project Type: Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

Category: Highly Recommended

Fit with Colorado Priorities:

The CCABC project is one of the most expansive and comprehensive middle-mile broadband projects in the state. The goal is to span the geographic boundaries that have historically precluded the interconnection of our more remote areas. This ambitious goal is only made possible because of CCABC’s unique ability to leverage cutting-edge technologies, their ability to build upon existing infrastructure resources and their strong network partnerships -both public and private-. The CCABC project has become an even stronger candidate in round two with the addition of a \$25.6 million cash and \$18.5 million in-kind matching contribution, constituting 30% of the total project cost.

By using public and private infrastructure that currently exists in Colorado, CCABC meets the priority of using existing infrastructure rather than overbuilding. As everyone looks for these limited grant dollars to go further, this is a critical priority and should be given great consideration. By employing this type of strategy, the project brings more bandwidth and service to its target areas and lifts the broadband capabilities of the entire State of Colorado by allowing the networks mentioned above to be connected.

This project is important to Colorado as it has an effect not only on its target market, but also on the entire broadband infrastructure of Colorado. By making broadband service more readily available throughout the state, this project will lower the costs of access for everyone and will spur competition, innovation, economic opportunity, and creativity that would otherwise lay dormant. The CCABC project is a strong fit with the goals of BTOP as well as the infrastructure and policy priorities of our state.

Applicant Name: Colorado Board of Education

Project Title: Bridging Colorado’s Digital Divide

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Category: Highly Recommended

Fit with Colorado Priorities:

The Bridging Colorado's Digital Divide project will provide a significant increase in computer access to some of the most vulnerable populations statewide while also developing new structured education and learning programs in neighborhoods with the highest unemployment rate in the state.

Bringing together BTOP funds and a \$753,776 cash match from the Gates foundation, the Bridging Colorado's Digital Divide project will significantly improve public access to computing centers across Colorado. Seventy six public computer centers, including 62 public libraries, 2 Ute Tribal facilities, 5 school library/public library combined facilities, and 7 library-run PCCS in rural communities would receive new or improved equipment. These facilities are strategically located in areas which have the greatest need. For communities that already have successful programs in place, this grant will help them expand to meet current needs.

Through the diverse offerings of the partners involved with this project, Bridging Colorado's Digital Divide is able to immediately advertise the new technology offerings and quickly get the public engaged. The project partners, which include community colleges, state workforce programs, schools and libraries, will share their educational expertise and ensure that there is a strong service and training component. The educational programs range from basic user skills to website design as well as a variety of online programs designed for job skill development and continuing education participation. The ultimate goal will be to make target populations more employable, educated and self-sufficient.

Applicant Name: Southwest Colorado Broadband (SWCBB)

Project Title: Total Broadband Access for Southwest Colorado

Project Type: Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

Category: Highly Recommended

Fit with Colorado Priorities:

Despite the growing technology industry and the advanced network infrastructure developed across Colorado's Front Range, the benefits of high-speed internet have been slow to reach the rural, predominantly agrarian communities in Southwestern Colorado. The Southwest Colorado Broadband application will build out new infrastructure in this region, providing key services to some of the most rural counties in Colorado. This proposal would transform the communication and interconnectivity of this rural region,

providing a vital modernization and connection to the economic pipeline of the Front Range.

SWCBB optimizes BTOP grant money by offering a strong 20% cash match as well as a land donation for a data center from the City of Cortez. By utilizing diverse technologies like WiMAX and point-to-point licensed microwave, this program will provide cost-effective high speed middle and last mile access to 95% of the population and 100% of the region's anchor institutions. Recent infrastructure feasibility studies in this region have shown that while there is demand for high-speed access, the cost of build out is prohibitive. Round two BTOP funding for this application would be vital in defraying these capital costs and would help serve this area for decades to come.

Recommended Application (1)

Applicant Name: El Pueblo Learning & Technologies Services

Project Title: Pueblo Education Broadband Technologies Opportunities Project

Project Type: Public Computer Center

Category: Recommended

Fit with Colorado Priorities:

The City of Pueblo remains one of the most diverse communities in Colorado, but it also has one of the highest unemployment rates and lowest high school graduation rates in the state. In order to engage these demographics, El Pueblo Learning and Technologies Services will improve and expand access to computing centers across the county. In addition to simply providing greater access, these centers will also utilize increased broadband speeds to offer new training and educational options to underserved, low income individuals, students, the elderly and disadvantaged small businesses.

The project fits well with state and BTOP priorities as it expands on preexisting computer facilities by upgrading computers, the speed of their internet connection and increases the educational offerings available at these facilities. Such service offerings will be oriented towards creating a population that is more technology savvy and attractive to employers who require workers to have a higher level of technological proficiency.

El Pueblo Learning & Technologies Services has also emphasized a model for long-term sustainability which will ensure that the program can flourish and provide to underserved populations for years to come.