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Organization: Region 18 Education Service Center

Project Name: Connect Southwest Texas

Project Type: Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

State: Texas

Federal Award: \$11,946,728

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Community-serving institutions in a 19-county region of southwest Texas often face insufficient broadband connectivity and access speeds, making it difficult to provide critical educational, economic, and medical services. Region 18 Education Service Center's Connect Southwest Texas project proposes to deploy new, high-speed middle-mile infrastructure across the area as part of a public-private collaboration with five regional broadband service providers. The project also aims to deploy or improve videoconferencing capabilities at local K-12 and higher-education institutions and work with the Texas Department of Public Safety to link its locations in Midland, Alpine, and Fort Stockton to the new network.

Connect Southwest Texas also proposes to:

- Connect up to 200 community anchor institutions, including as many as 33 K-12 schools, 43 public safety entities, 21 libraries, 38 government facilities, three Hispanic-serving community colleges, two additional universities, and 44 healthcare providers.
- Enable access speeds between 10 Mbps and 1 Gbps, and backbone speeds as high as 10 Gbps, across southwestern Texas. The counties to benefit from the project include Andrews, Brewster, Crane, Culberson, Ector, Glasscock, Howard, Jeff Davis, Loving, Martin, Midland, Pecos, Presidio, Reagan, Reeves, Terrell, Upton, Ward, and Winkler Counties. The network would also provide dual direct, 1 Gbps links to McDonald Observatory in the Davis Mountains, which is currently limited to an inadequate 3 Mbps network due to its mountainous terrain.
- Facilitate more affordable and accessible broadband service for up to 40,000 households and 8,000 businesses by enabling local Internet service providers to utilize the project's open network, while constructing 218 miles of new fiber and four new microwave towers and incorporating an existing local microwave network.

ORGANIZATION'S HISTORY

The Region 18 Education Service Center is one of 20 Texas Education Service Centers serving as the liaison between the Texas Education Agency and local schools. Region 18, which covers 37,553 square miles and includes 19 counties, 33 school districts, over 6,300 educators, and approximately 81,000 students, aims to serve as a first-choice partner in meeting the educational needs of all the region's students. Region 18 has extensive experience managing grants and other state, local, and federal funding.

PROJECT PARTNERS

- Wes-Tex Telecommunications Ltd
- Delcom, Inc.
- Hill Country Telephone Cooperative
- Poka Lambro Telephone Cooperative
- Big Bend Telephone Company
- Global Technology Solutions
- Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission
- Texas Department of Public Safety
- Midland College
- Odessa College

Data provided in the project description is based on information supplied by the applicant. An executive summary of this application can be found on www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandusa.

For press-related inquiries, contact 202-482-7002 or press@ntia.doc.gov. For the general public, contact BTOP@ntia.doc.gov.

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