

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Performance Progress Report

2. Award Or Grant Number

01-50-M09013

4. Report Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

10-12-2011

1. Recipient Name

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)

6. Designated Entity On Behalf Of:

n/a

3. Street Address

P.O. Box 5690, 401 Adams Avenue,

8. Final Report?

Yes

No

9. Report Frequency

Quarterly

Semi Annual

Annual

Final

5. City, State, Zip Code

Montgomery, AL 36104-5690

7. Project / Grant Period
Start Date: (MM/DD/YYYY)

11-01-2009

7a. End Date: (MM/DD/YYYY)

10-30-2014

7b. Reporting Period End Date:

09-30-2011

9a. If Other, please describe:

n/a

10. Broadband Mapping

10a. Provider Table

Number of Providers Identified	Number of Providers Contacted	Number of Agreements Reached for Data Sharing	Number of Partial Data Sets Received	Number of Complete Data Sets	Number of Data Sets Verified
0	0	0	0	0	0

10b. Are you submitting the required PROVIDER DATA by using the Excel spreadsheet provided by the SBDD grants office? Yes No

10c. Have you encountered challenges with any providers that indicate they may refuse to participate in this project? Yes No

10d. If so, describe the discussions to date with each of these providers and the current status

Total provider count and the status of each provider is supplied in the datapackage.xls file submitted with the complete Alabama dataset from Round 4 which was due to NTIA on October 1, 2011. There was no additional data collection in Q3 2011. The next round of data collection (Round 5) begins on January 2, 2012.

As previously reported, only two providers in Alabama have formally declined to participate in the program through Round 4. They are:

**Broadview Network Holdings, Inc.: Declined to Participate - this provider has declined to participate in the program. We continue to contact them with each new round of data collection, but they have not changed their position.

**Castleberry Communications Inc.: Declined to Participate - this provider has declined to participate in the program. We continue to contact them with each new round of data collection, but they have not changed their position.

The following providers did not provide data in Round 4, but also have not formally decline to participate. We will continue to reach out to these providers to encourage their participation in future Rounds.

**Interglobe Comm

**Residential Data Solutions (RDASOL)

**Cellular South

**Cavalier Telephone

**James Cable - AL

**Open Range

**DSL by Air

**pcAirLiNk Wireless

**Rapid Cable

**Utopian Wireless Corporation

**Mobile Internet Services

**Shelby Telecom

**Aerowire, Inc

**Boondocks Wireless

**Dixie Land Internet Services

**Traveler Information Services

**Media3

**VeriQik

**Gosuto
**NetSpeedNow.com
**Beyond Communications
**Scottsboro Electric Power Board
**Network Solutions
**S and V Wireless
**Harbor Communications, LLC
**HorizonWisp.net
**Cobridge Communication
**Conexus Communications
**JMF Solutions, Inc
**Ragland Telephone Company
**Cable Star
**WP Media
**CTSWireless.NET

10e. If you are collecting data through other means (e.g. data extraction, extrapolation, etc), please describe your progress to date and the relevant activities to be undertaken in the future

As has been previously reported, the LinkAMERICA team verifies and augments provider data with coverage and speed information from third party sources. This activity is repeated in each data collection round. We do not substitute third party information for provider-supplied information unless we can independently verify that the provider information is incorrect. More often we use discrepancies to identify areas where further investigation is required.

If providers do not submit data, but we are able to verify infrastructure information through other sources, we use common engineering principles to estimate coverage and speed. We are also collecting user feedback (discussed below in the verification section) via location-specific feedback mechanisms on the state interactive map.

10f. Please describe the verification activities you plan to implement

The LinkAMERICA team uses consistent data verification procedures in each data collection round - adding new procedures after they have been developed and tested. These procedures are common to all four LinkAMERICA states. As previously described, we believe verification can be segmented into four distinct categories/activities:

** Third Party Data Comparison: As data arrives from providers we compare submissions against several commercial data sources to identify obviously anomalies or areas for further investigation. An example would be the comparison of an ILECs reported coverage area boundaries with the legal exchange areas shown in the commercial ExchangeInfo data product. Coverage footprints of wireless providers are compared against AmericanRoamer database. This process occurs with each data collection round

** Provider Validation: PDF check maps and other tools are produced at the beginning of each data collection round based upon prior round coverage reports. In Q2 2011 LinkAMERICA added the ability to supply check maps in GoogleEarth format, allowing providers to update coverage boundaries directly within the check map. This new process will be launched in the Round 4 data collection period and will occur with each subsequent data collection round.

** Data Format Verification: Proprietary and NTIA-supplied scripts are run against the dataset prior to submission to ensure the data is properly formatted and will be fully received upon submittal - this process occurs with each data collection round.

** Consumer Feedback/Verification: The ConnectingALABAMA interactive map contains a user feedback mechanism that identifies the precise coordinates of each point of feedback. As more user feedback is collected, we are able to identify and investigate areas where consumer feedback conflicts with provider information.

10g. Have you initiated verification activities? Yes No

10h. If yes, please describe the status of your activities

As described above, these activities occur and are improved upon, when necessary, with each data collection round.

10i. If verification activities have not been initiated please provide a projected time line for beginning and completing such activities

Our existing verification practices will soon be enhanced as follows:

** Improved user feedback form and display layer: A new layer is being added to the state interactive map to display the location of user feedback points. This additional information will help other users understand where coverage may be in question, and will help the mapping team better identify areas for increased investigation. A Beta version of this feature was released to the state for testing in Q3, browser issues discovered in testing are being addressed and the final version will be released for public view in Q4.

** Mobile Wireless Broadband Drive Testing: This process will use a special device from a vendor to test signal strength and bandwidth/throughput on multiple mobile wireless signals at the same time. This technology will be used in areas where there is a large discrepancy between provider-reported coverage/speed and consumer-reported coverage/speed to determine the actual coverage and speed characteristics - commences in early 2012.

** Mobile Wireless Crowd Sourced Testing: This process will use a proprietary smart phone app, provided by a vendor, to constantly

check signal strength and bandwidth/throughput on the user's mobile phone. The application will be available on multiple phone platforms and will be downloadable by consumers in each LinkAMERICA state. It runs in the background on the consumer's phone and does not impact phone performance. Data is sent from the vendor to LinkAMERICA for use in validating provider coverage and speed reports - commences in early 2012.

Staffing

10j. How many jobs have been created or retained as a result of this project?

In Q3 2011 SBDD funding resulted in 2.68 FTEs at the Prime Recipient level and 0.82 total FTEs at the Subrecipient level - for a total of 3.50 FTEs.

10k. Is the project currently fully staffed? Yes No

10l. If no, please explain how any lack of staffing may impact the project's time line and when the project will be fully staffed

In Q3 2011, the SBDD project was fully staffed with 3.50 FTEs.

10m. When fully staffed, how many full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs do you expect to create or retain as a result of this project?

When fully staffed, 3.50 FTEs were retained as a result of this project.

10n. Staffing Table

Job Title	FTE %	Date of Hire
CEO-Supervisor Role	1	11/01/2009
Project Director	6	11/01/2009
Project Manager	19	09/05/2011
GIS Director	22	11/01/2009
Internal System Support/Architecture	15	11/01/2009
Provider Relations Manager	20	09/07/2010
Regional Coordinator	83	09/07/2010
Regional Coordinator	92	08/30/2010
Regional Coordinator	93	07/05/2011

Sub Contracts

10o. Subcontracts Table

Name of Subcontractor	Purpose of Subcontract	RFP Issued (Y/N)	Contract Executed (Y/N)	Start Date	End Date	Federal Funds	In-Kind Funds
CostQuest Associates Inc/LinkAMERICA Alliance	CostQuest Associates Inc/LinkAMERICA Alliance	Y	Y	11/01/2009	11/09/2012	1,499,424	475,028
TBD	TBD	N	N	02/01/2012	10/31/2012	1,760,324	420,724

Funding

10p. How much Federal funding has been expended as of the end of the last quarter? \$1,443,694 10q. How much Remains? \$3,430,448

10r. How much matching funds have been expended as of the end of last quarter? \$521,742 10s. How much Remains? \$697,741

10t. Budget Worksheet

Mapping Budget Element	Federal Funds Granted	Proposed In-Kind	Total Budget	Federal Funds Expended	Matching Funds Expended	Total Funds Expended

Mapping Budget Element	Federal Funds Granted	Proposed In-Kind	Total Budget	Federal Funds Expended	Matching Funds Expended	Total Funds Expended
Personal Salaries	\$878,096	\$228,405	\$1,113,301	\$102,382	\$0	\$102,382
Personnel Fringe Benefits	\$434,254	\$85,318	\$512,772	\$54,030	\$0	\$54,030
Travel	\$98,715	\$0	\$98,715	\$8,801	\$0	\$8,801
Equipment	\$64,700	\$0	\$64,700	\$0	\$0	\$0
Materials / Supplies	\$19,044	\$0	\$19,044	\$5,460	\$0	\$5,460
Subcontracts Total	\$3,259,748	\$895,752	\$4,155,500	\$1,237,840	\$521,742	\$1,759,582
Subcontract #1	\$1,499,424	\$475,028	\$0	\$1,237,840	\$521,742	\$1,759,582
Subcontract #2	\$1,760,324	\$420,724	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #3	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #4	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #5	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other	\$15,000	\$0	\$15,000	\$841	\$0	\$841
Total Direct Costs	\$4,769,557	\$1,209,475	\$5,979,032	\$1,409,353	\$521,742	\$1,931,095
Total Indirect Costs	\$104,585	\$10,008	\$114,593	\$34,341	\$0	\$34,341
Total Costs	\$4,874,142	\$1,219,483	\$6,093,625	\$1,443,694	\$521,742	\$1,965,436
% Of Total	80	20	0	30	43	0

Hardware / Software

10u. Has the project team purchased the software / hardware described in the application? Yes No

10v. If yes, please list

Laptop computer and software for Sub Recipient Project Manager (AL allocated portion): \$352.78

This is the same list of equipment provided in previous reports:

Laptop computer and software for Sub Recipient Vendor Relations Manager (AL allocated portion): \$339.48

2 Desktop PCs: \$2464.00

1 Presentation Projector: \$374.00

1 Uninterrupted Power Supply: \$121.00

1 Printer: \$375.10

1 Dell Precision T5500 Workstation w/Arclnfo C (AL allocated portion): \$3,458.59*

*The Arclnfo software was a necessary purchase to enable CostQuest to run the validation script, on provider data, that NTIA & FCC require for the SBDD program. Purchasing the hardware/software bundle was the most cost effective way to acquire the needed software. Without the hardware the cost for the software alone would have been \$1000 higher. This expense was allocated evenly to each of the four LinkAMERICA states.

10w. Please note any software / hardware that has yet to be purchased and explain why it has not been purchased

Once again, as previously noted, all software/hardware listed in the budget for Years 1-2 has been purchased. Software and Hardware for transition of the interactive maps to state hosting, in the amount of \$44,700 will be purchased in 2012. This purchase will include a Database Server, Web/GIS Server, and external storage device, and the necessary MS SQL Server and ESRI software licenses.

10x. Has the project team purchased or used any data sets? Yes No

10y. If yes, please list

American Roamer: Wireless coverage information - \$5147

Media Prints: Cable system information - \$500

ExchangeInfo: ILEC exchange area boundaries - \$3805

10z. Are there any additional project milestones or information that has not been included? Yes No

10aa. If yes, please list

In May 2011 the LinkAMERICA team updated the ConnectingALABAMA interactive map with the newest data collected and submitted to NTIA on April 1st. Several additional features were added to the map at the same time, making it easier for users to see Maximum Advertised Speed available for each technology type.

For Round 4 the the collection of CAI data was transitioned from the sub-recipient, CostQuest, to ADECA. CostQuest continued to support ADECA with processing and reporting of the data to NTIA.

10bb. Please describe any challenge or obstacle that you have encountered and detail the mitigation strategies the project team is employing

**As anticipated, the data collection for Round 4 proved to be especially challenging due to the change to 2010 Census vintage.

LinkAMERICA found that many providers were ill equipped to make this transition and needed assistance. The move to the new Census vintage also resulted in a significant change in block counts in the LinkAMERICA states and we anticipate the reflection of that change to impact the view of provider coverage on the interactive map. We have communicated extensively with providers throughout the Round 4 collection period to make them aware of the change and to assist with the data issues associated with it.

**We continue to encounter difficulty in reconciling reported provider speeds with the NTIA speed range parameters. We envision this problem becoming more pronounced as the program requires a more granular reporting of provider speed information.

10cc. Please provide any other information that you think would be useful to NTIA as it assesses your Broadband Mapping Project

The release of the updated National Broadband Map in September caused confusion for some providers as it came just after the deadline date for submitting updates for the Round 4 data collection. Providers also continue to be frustrated in the lag time between data collection and posting to the NBM and question the value of maps with such dated information. They are concerned that consumers won't be properly informed on their most recent efforts to expand broadband coverage. We encourage NTIA to make map updates a priority after each data submission round, and to be sensitive to the timing of the release of the updates. Additionally, sufficient time and instruction are needed before changes to the format and/or type of data being requested, for a collection period, is communicated to the provider community. Asking for changes just prior to a collection period creates frustration for the provider community and makes it more difficult to collect the necessary information.

11. Broadband Planning

11a. Please describe progress made against all goals, objectives, and milestones detailed in the approved Project Plan. Be sure to include a description of each major activity / milestone that you plan to complete and your current status

The following milestones were contained in our original Project Plan. These milestones have been listed in prior Quarterly reports and have been updated to reflect their status as of the end of Q3 2011.

**Complete interviews with key statewide stakeholders to determine initial state and region-specific broadband expansion/adoption goals. Status: completed

**Publish interview results through a series of interactive video segments to educate public and promote planning project goals. Status: completed

**Hire Statewide Coordinator and four Regional Coordinators to coordinate assembly of regional planning teams. Status: completed

**Open office at Alabama State University and hire interns to assist with CAI and community development efforts. Status: completed

**Form 12 Regional Action Teams to formulate regional plans for broadband expansion and adoption. Status: completed (all 12 teams in place and meetings are conducted as needed for plan development and review.)

**Publish DRAFT regional investment plans, and post to public site for review. Status: Completed-the plans are currently under public review, anticipated adoption of the plans in Q4.

**Publish FINAL regional investment plans. Status: pending-awaiting ALBI Board and community comment period to end.

**Develop up to five prototype engagement and outreach modules for implementation of regional plans in Years 3-5. Status: pending-the modules are developed and are under review. Anticipated release date in Q4.

11b. Please describe any challenge or obstacle that you have encountered and detail the mitigation strategies the project team is employing

**Tornado disaster recovery efforts - By far the largest challenge to the Planning process this Spring was the devastation caused by a series of tornadoes in late April. Many of our rural regions were hit especially hard and their focus understandably turned to disaster recovery. The state Planning Team assisted in these recovery efforts and believes broadband will play a key role in long term recovery for many of these regions. Although delayed slightly, completion of the draft regional investment plans are back on track and have been posted for public review.

11c. Does the Project Team anticipate any changes to the project plan for Broadband Planning? Yes No

11d. If yes, please describe these anticipated changes. Please note that NTIA will need to approve changes to the Project Plan before they can be implemented

N/A

Funding

11e. How much Federal funding has been expended as of the end of the last quarter? \$0

11f. How much Remains? \$0

11g. How much matching funds have been expended as of the end of last quarter? \$0

11h. How much Remains? \$0

11i. Planning Worksheet

11i. Planning Worksheet

Personal Salaries	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Personnel Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Materials / Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontracts Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #1	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #2	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #3	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #4	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subcontract #5	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Direct Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Indirect Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
% Of Total	0	0	0	0	0	0

Additional Planning Information

11j. Are there any additional project milestones or information that has not been included?

ConnectingAlabama Team performed additional research as needed to finalize the drafted Investment Plans, and conducted one final Broadband Investment Plan meeting in each region to complete the plans in all regions. Broadband Investment Plan drafts were published for the public to review and comment. In addition, a ConnectingALABAMA funding "playbook" was developed for community based broadband investments. The Broadband 2011 Consumer Survey was conducted, results will be published in Q4. The 2010 Annual Report, while available digitally, is now available in print.

11k. Please describe any challenge or obstacle that you have encountered and detail the mitigation strategies the Project Team is employing

As the public reviewed the Broadband Investment Plans, majority of the responders commented on their inability to access broadband rather than commenting on the Investment Plans. This will be a main topic during the Q4 Alabama Broadband Advisory Board meeting.

11l. Please provide any other information that you think would be useful to NTIA as it assesses your Broadband Mapping Project

The logistics for implementing the priorities established in the Broadband Investment Plans will be determined in Year 2, Quarter 4. RFQ's will be issued to eligible Alabama research Universities. The ConnectingAlabama team will also assess capacity building support needs of the 12 regional planning teams. In addition, the ConnectingAlabama team will implement initial programs to build Alabama capacity to sustain broadband development

12. Certification: I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that this report is correct and complete for performance of activities for the purpose set forth in the award documents.

12a. Typed or Printed Name and Title of Authorized Certifying Official

Jennifer Felder

12c. Telephone
(area code, number, and extension)

12d. Email Address

Jennifer.felder@adeca.alabama.gov

12b. Signature of Authorized Certifying Official

Submitted Electronically

12e. Date Report Submitted
(Month, Day, Year)

11-16-2011