

February 25, 2010

Mr. Lawrence E. Strickling
Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP)
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington DC 20230

RE: Letter of Commitment for BTOP Grant

Dear NTIA Grant Reviewers and Mr. Strickling,

I write to you today to express our commitment to the University of Wisconsin – Extension’s **Building Community Capacity through Broadband** (BCCB) BTOP applications, for comprehensive community infrastructure and for sustainable broadband adoption. Both address critical needs for our community through a project that will provide us with the impetus and support we greatly need to build community capacity in West Central Wisconsin.

Cooperative Educational Service Agency 10 (CESA 10) is a regional educational service agency serving thirty school districts in western Wisconsin, ranging from 170 to 10,000 in student population.

We are collaborating on this important endeavor because:

- We know it can have long-lasting impact on how we learn, live and work. Access to high quality coursework, information and other resources is now critical to formal and ongoing education, and can only be delivered by ubiquitous broadband infrastructure.
- This effort will improve broadband access in some areas, and provide new service to areas not having access before. The improved access will include broadband wireless services to areas never before having that option.
- Studies show that increasing time on task is fundamental in increasing student achievement. Hence, the afore-mentioned access to high quality coursework, information and other resources **inside and outside the school day** is essential to **ALL** children. Our project will provide greater access to the underprivileged to help narrow that achievement gap.

As a collaborator we are supporting this effort by:

- Providing ongoing leadership to our membership both in the procurement and use of broadband technology. This includes negotiating connections, providing programming and providing training to maximize usage.
- Providing fiscal agent resources to the projects where applicable.

- Assisting in the educational outreach component of BCCB by:
 - Delivering training to our identified underserved populations utilizing materials designed by UW-Extension
 - Delivering training to schools in the effective use of tools requiring broadband access including video conferencing and the use of online learning management systems.

As a result of these grants, additional CESA 10 school districts will have access to the following:

- Broadband service will be made available to areas in communities that currently have sporadic access at best.
- Broadband services as a member of Community Area Networks can be delivered more economically without reoccurring transport charges.
- Management and maintenance of servers and servers will decrease as more services are shared.
- New member of Community Area Networks will have new capabilities to communicate and transport data among anchor institutions, and share application costs.
- This effort will help shape realistic models of broadband deployment and tremendously expand educational resources for our community.

Because of the innovative and highly positive benefits (broadband access to raise student achievement and increase efficiencies) that can be derived from this effort, we strongly support the project described and urge your positive consideration and funding of University of Wisconsin – Extension’s *Building Community Capacity through Broadband* grant applications.

Sincerely,



Ross N. Wilson

Director, Educational Technology Services CESA 10



Mark K. Dorn
Controller

UW - Extension