

## **Summary of Final Report**

**Organization Name:** Humboldt State University

**Project Title:** Broadband Aggregation

**Amount of Grant Award:** \$50,000

**Date of Final Report:** October 15, 2009

### **1. What were the project goals and were they achieved?**

#### **Goals**

The project goal was to ensure that our region engages in a successful approach to broadband deployment. The project would provide a benchmark of current regional readiness to participate in the changes that high-speed communications entail. The idea behind the project was to aggregate demand so that a business case could be made for investment in infrastructure for rural broadband locally. The project would result in various business scenarios for broadband infrastructure development.

This was the first phase of a project leading to the long-term goal of making available ubiquitous broadband to all rural communities in the region.

Intermediate project goals were focused on identification of broadband aggregation opportunities by surveying towns, cities and counties. This would lead to determining the size and location of unserved areas and specific recommendations for addressing those gaps. In addition, a preferred infrastructure scenario would be identified, mechanisms for purchasing backhaul, and policy recommendations.

The study created through this project achieved the phase I goals and analyzed and compiled information on:

- Demand – willingness to pay, relative importance of broadband to homes and businesses, present rated and demand aggregation
- Supply – mapping of current coverage, identifying unserved and underserved communities and identification of critical missing infrastructure
- Current policy climate, including barriers to rural deployment and opportunities for advocacy

Conclusions from the study are available at:

<http://redwoodcoastconnect.humboldt.edu/?content=docs>

### **2. What were the activities undertaken and accomplishments through the completion of this grant?**

- Received 1869 completed surveys (a combination of written, online, telephone and business mail-back)
- Held seven community meetings throughout the region.
- Created GIS Data Maps to analyze supply/demand/population

- Submitted a draft Telecommunication Element with Broadband to the Humboldt County Planning Department for the general plan update
- Created Rural Broadband policy recommendation
- Final report available at <http://redwoodcoastconnect.humboldt.edu/?content=docs>
- Project received attention of high level administrators within California who will advocates for policy change and public funding
- Submitted applications to the federal government for first round broadband stimulus funding, decision pending as of this date and is anticipated prior to the end of December 2009.

### **3. What are the lasting benefits of the project?**

- Possible federal funding for regional broadband connections.
- Private businesses engaged in process for providing broadband for our region.
- Increased awareness by community, local, and state government of the need for broadband access and redundancy
- Once a improved broadband infrastructure is in place, it will help in attracting new businesses that require a robust, reliable broadband connection and retaining businesses that are looking to grow their operations.

### **4. How will you continue work started by this project?**

This study was led by Redwood Coast Connect, a project of Redwood Coast Rural Action (RCRA), which is a regional network of community leaders in partnership with the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF).

Redwood Coast Connect will continue to advocate for the region to obtain funding for infrastructure for broadband access and assist where able in the second round of anticipated Broadband stimulus funding.