



DLT Awards - Montana

2006 Grant Awards

Benefis Healthcare Foundation

Great Falls, MT

\$382,914

Areas Served: Blaine, Cascade, Chouteau, Glacier, Hill, Liberty, Meagher, Phillips, Pondera, Teton, Toole

Contact: Mr. Jack W. King

Telephone: 406-455-4285

Fax: 406-455-4141

Congressional District: MT-At Large

Rural Development funds will be used to bring computerized radiography technology to 8 remote hospitals and clinics. The project will also provide interactive video technology for the delivery of clinical telehealth services to 12 hospitals in the region. The project will expand the current capabilities of the REACH Network and remote sites to include the delivery of advanced medical specialties of oncology, radiology, wound care, cardiology, and orthopedics via telehealth technology.

Missoula Community Health Services, Inc., dba Mineral Community Hospital

Superior, MT

\$265,752

Areas Served: Granite, Lake, Mineral

Contact: Mr. James P. Henshaw

Telephone: 406-822-4841

Fax: 406-822-4963

Congressional District: MT – At Large

Rural Development funds will be used to install computed radiography equipment at all end-user sites to enable production of digital radiographic images which can be transmitted in real time over PACS to trained radiologists for interpretation. The project will also expand the storage capability of the existing PACS system and establish connectivity for transmission of medical images and data on the expanded PACS server.



2005 Grant Awards:

Clark Fork Valley Hospital

Plains, MT

\$134,947

Areas Served: Sanders County

Contact: Carla Neiman

Telephone: 406-826-4851

Fax: 406-826-4870

Congressional District: MT-At Large

Clark Fork Valley Hospital will install a Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS) as well as internet technology and training to provide enhanced digital imaging and access to medical images to improve health care delivery for 10,455 rural Montanans.

2004 Grant Awards:

St. Luke Hospital and Nursing Home

Ronan, Montana

\$500,000

Area(s) served: Cities of Plains, Polson, Ronan and St. Ignatius

Contact: Stephen Sivak, 406-528-5372; Fax: 406-676-0105

Congressional District(s): MT-At Large

St Luke Hospital and Nursing Home will develop a teleradiology network that will connect the hospital and rural clinics in Northwest Montana, using a Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS). The hospital information system and radiology information system will be integrated to allow for rapid transfer of patient data. The project will assist 20,151 residents in the extremely rural communities served by St. Luke by greatly reducing or eliminating extensive travel and will provide a continuance of care with the patients' healthcare providers.



2003 Grant Awards:

Benefis Healthcare Foundation; Great Falls, MT

\$404,086

Area(s) Served: State of Montana

Contact: Jack W. King (406) 455-5840; Fax: (406) 455-4821

Congressional District(s): At Large

Benefits Health Care Foundation will utilize RUS grant funds to upgrade and expand the current telemedicine network for education and clinical purposes. The upgraded system will allow for additional services such as teleradiology, telepharmacy, and specialty physician consults that will improve access for residents for frontier communities. The system expansion will also improve the quantity, quality, and access to medical information systems, continuing medical education, and educational opportunities for healthcare professionals. Benefits Healthcare Foundation serves over 140,000 residents covering 45,000 square miles in North central Montana.

2002 Awards

Eastern Montana Education Telecommunications; Glendive, Montana

\$430,071 Grant

Area(s) Served: Towns of Baker, Glendive, Fairview, Lambert, Lavina, Plevna, Richey, Roundup, Roy, Savage, Terry, Wibaux and Melstone, Miles City

Contact: John McNiel (406) 776-2317; Fax: (406) 776-2260

Congressional District(s): At-Large

The Eastern Montana Education Telecommunications (EMET) is a consortium which will use RUS grant funds for distance learning purposes for rural K-12 schools and community colleges. The EMET partnership consists of 17 different entities including fourteen (14) public K-12 schools, two (2) community colleges, and one (1) state university. The K-12 schools are predominately small, rural schools in very remote areas looking to supplement their limited staff and funds by sharing teachers and other resources with other K-12 schools, colleges, and universities around Montana and the world. Each school participating in the project will bring an interactive connection with the state and the world into 14 exceptionally rural eastern Montana communities. The two community colleges are also located in rural areas and are facing limited funding for on-site resources. The participation of Montana State University in this project is moving towards having bachelor and Ph.D. programs available directly to eastern Montana's rural communities. The network created through this project will also be available to hospitals in communities that cannot afford to install their own telemedicine sites. Distance learning for rural students, special education, adult education, professional development, workforce development, and other community education purposes will be the predominant use of the system. The equipment that will be purchased for each network site includes the Tandberg 6000 series codec platform running over a high-speed Internet



Protocol network. The expected benefits of this project which include fewer miles traveled, reduced out-migration, increased local training opportunities, access to quality educational opportunities will reach nearly 4,000 students in 13 rural eastern Montana public K-12 schools and over 1,000 full-time and 600 part-time students in two local community colleges. Sixteen (16) rural communities with 13,400 residents in 9 counties will also be served by this project.

Deaconess Billings Clinic Foundation; Billings, Montana

\$209,300 Grant

Area(s) Served: Montana: Forsyth in Rosebud County / Wyoming: Greybull and Lovell in Big Horn County

Contact: Beth Midgley (406) 657-4621; Fax: (406) 657-3872

Congressional District(s): Applicant and Project: Montana - At-Large and Wyoming-At-Large.

Deaconess Billings Clinic proposes a telemedicine project which will use RUS grant funds to acquire teleradiology workstations in order link two (2) medical facilities in Northern Wyoming and one (1) in Eastern Montana to Deaconess Billings Clinic's Radiology Department in the formation of a teleradiology network to transfer medical images and allow for radiology consultation. The project is expected to provide: (1) Practitioners in rural health care facilities access to immediate teleradiology consultation with a radiologist at Deaconess Billings Clinic; (2) Reduce the time, expenses and discomfort of travel for patients; and, (3) Prompt diagnosis with improved management of trauma cases. Currently it takes rural health care centers 6 to 7 days to receive a radiologist's interpretation on films. As a result of patients receiving medical treatment within their home communities, the economic resources of patients will be retained within their communities. The proposed project expands the existing digital imaging plan and teleradiology network which allows three additional rural sites to be networked in a unique teleradiology web for clinical support, access to care, and education. The equipment contained within the teleradiology network plan provides an infrastructure for any future expansion and/or creation of individual digital imaging plans. The vendors that were chosen for the project provide open-architecture and ensure compliance to national standards for future viability and growth of the project. The project has the potential to serve over 15,000 people.

Montana State University; Havre, MT

\$398,785 Grant

Area(s) Served: Counties of Blaine, Hill, Glacier, Fergus, Roosevelt, Cascade

Contact: Janice Brady (406) 265-3730; Fax (406) 265-3777

Congressional District(s): At-Large

The Montana State University will use RUS grant funds for the upgrade and expansion of its video conferencing distance education network. The RUS funded a distance learning grant for this applicant in the mid-1990's that was used to install technology in a number



of K-12 schools. This Fiscal Year 2002 grant is being requested to expand the number of schools served and to replace the outdated equipment that newer network infrastructures can no longer support. The geographic isolation of this area makes it a natural selection for this type of a project. A population of 902,000 people over 147,000 square miles of farm and rangeland translates to only 6.2 persons per square mile. From an economic standpoint, Montana ranked 46th in per capita income in the U.S. Of the ten counties in the service area three are among the poorest in an exceptionally poor state. This project will address many of the problems in this area caused by serious teacher shortages, limited access to higher education, interconnectivity between education providers and instructional staff, and disparities in economic and social development in the state. The project is expected to provide benefits to 1,450 students.

2001 Awards:

Saint Vincent Foundation; Billings, Montana

\$368,142 Grant

Area(s) Served: Powell, Beaverhead, Silver Bow and Deer Lodge Counties, Montana and Sheridan County, Wyoming

Contact: Doris T. Barta; (406) 237-3602, Fax: (406) 237-3619

Congressional District(s): Applicant: At-large - MT. Project: At-large - MT & WY.

This grant will enable the Partners in Health Telemedicine Network to extend and improve telemedicine services in 5 end user sites, 4 rural hospitals and 1 clinic. This would eliminate the need to transfer approximately 1,486 patients annually to a medical facility a large distance away from their homes.

Deaconess Billings Clinic Foundation, Billings, Montana

\$500,000 Grant

Area(s) Served: Big Horn, Carbon, Musselshell, and Sweet Grass

Contact: Beth Midgley; (406) 657-4670

Fax: (406) 657-3872

Congressional District(s): At-Large.

RUS Grant Funds will be used for the expansion of the teleradiology network to include five rural and frontier sites in northern and eastern Montana that will allow for shared resources in radiologist coverage, access to after-hours radiologist coverage, access to specialist at Deaconess Billings Clinic, educational opportunities and improved management of patient radiology images and records.



Poplar Public Schools; Poplar, Montana

\$350,000 Grant

Area(s) Served: Daniels, Poplar, Roosevelt, Stillwater, Yellowstone, and Valley

Contact: Ms. Margaret Fisher; (406) 768-5288, Fax: (406) 768-5510

Congressional District(s): At-Large.

The distance learning classroom will provide classes, seminars and lectures in subjects and topics only available in the urban locations of the State or in the urban schools. The network will bridge the distance and bring special topics and advanced placement classes right to the school site. The five schools are situated in exceptionally rural towns, serve children and community members remotely located on farms and ranches and are diverse in culture, socio-economic and religious traditions.

2000 Awards:

DEACONESS BILLING CLINIC FOUNDATION, Billings, Montana

\$260,000 Grant

Area(s) served: Yellowstone, Carbon, Bighorn, Sweetgrass and Musselshell

Contact: Ms. Beth Midgley, (406) 657-4621; FAX: (406) 657-3872

Congressional District: At Large

Deaconess Billings Clinic Foundation is a medical foundation comprised of a multi-specialty 160-physician group practice, a 272-bed JCAHO accredited hospital, and a 90-bed nursing/retirement home. The foundation service area covers a 300-mile radius providing 70 specialty clinics to 25 rural communities. Hospital staff currently does not have the ability to consult with radiologist and must transfer patients to urban medical facilities. Deaconess Billings Clinic Foundation will establish a system of teleradiology, Regional Digital Imaging Network, so that health care practitioners can have immediate consultation with a radiologist in rural communities. In addition, the system will also allow for connectivity and access to any teleradiology site in the country, eliminate the need to have images mailed or delivered by courier and allow patients to receive medical diagnosis in their own community.

EUREKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS, Eureka, Montana

\$51,579 Grant

Area(s) served: Lincoln

Contact: Mr. Terry Vanderpan, (406) 296-2502; FAX: (406) 296-2644

Congressional District: At large

Eureka Public Schools are set in Lincoln County, which is located in northwest Montana, bordered by Canada in the North, Galton Mountain Range in the east, Purcell Range in the west, and upper Flathead Valley in the south. A school/community based partnership was formed to establish learning centers in Eureka, Troy and Libby. The grant funds will



be used to extend the existing technology in a school/community based partnership learning center in Eureka with interactive video education. The benefits of this extension will include rural schools sharing resources, providing links to high schools, community colleges, vocational schools and universities. In addition, the system will allow for interactive business conferencing, training of employees and special training programs for the disabled and elderly.

FAIRVIEW SCHOOLS; Fairview, Montana

\$51,995 Grant

Area(s) served: Richland

Contact: Mr. Ken Avison, (406) 747-5265; FAX: (406) 747-3336

Congressional District: At Large

Fairview School District is comprised of 276 students, 115 students in grades K-6, 41 students in grades 7-8, and 120 students in grades 9-12. The schools are located in extreme eastern Montana, on the Montana-North Dakota State line. The Distance Learning project will link Fairview Schools to an existing Interactive Television Network comprised of 23 high schools, two community colleges, and one State University. This project will offer mandated programs, a variety of electives, advanced placement courses as well as college level credit courses. In addition, parents, organizations, and businesses will benefit through adult education courses, emergency services training, special license training, organizational meetings and business video conferencing.

SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE, Pablo, Montana

\$108,870 Grant

Area(s) served: Idaho: Benewha, Caribou, Jefferson, and, Nez Perce; Oregon: Jefferson and Umatilla; Washington: Clallam, Ferry, Gray's, Stevens, and Yakima

Contact: Mr. Mike O'Donnell, (406) 675-4800-ext.203; FAX: (406) 675-2427

Congressional Districts: Idaho: 1, 2; Montana 1; Oregon 2; Washington 7, 12, 15, 24

Salish Kootenai College, located on the Flathead Reservation, in the state of Montana, is proposing to establish distance learning facilities at ten Indian reservations located in the States of Idaho, Oregon and Washington. As many as 60 health related courses, leading towards accredited degrees, will be offered at the Indian reservations, which are primarily located in geographically and economically challenged areas. In addition, a degree program in Environmental Science will be offered.



1999 Award:

Saint Vincent Hospital and Health Center; Billings, Montana

\$276,750 Grant

Counties Served: Stillwater, Carbon, and Big Horn

Contact: Mr. John Zauher, (406) 237-4530: Fax (406) 237-4523

St. Vincent Foundation will use grant funds to enhance and expand The Partners in Health Telemedicine Network (PHTN) to four rural communities in south central Montana (Absarokee, Bridger, Hardin and Red Lodge). PHTN utilizes two-way interactive videotelecommunications technology for the delivery of specialist medical services, mental health services, continuing medical education and community development initiatives in rural geographically isolated communities in the area. Cutting edge telecommunications and telemedicine technology will be used in the provision of services to these four rural communities. A Telemedicine Instrumentation Pack (TIP) will be used at the Absarokee clinic for possible testing in a mining operation. The TIP development was funded by NASA to use in the shuttle program and for deployment on the international space station.

1998 Awards:

Lodge Grass Public Schools

\$347,430 Grant

Location: Lodge Grass, Montana

Area(s) served: Big Horn and Yellowstone

Contact Ms. Sharon Peregoy

Telephone Number: (406) 639-2304

Fax Number: (406) 639-2388

Congressional District(s): At Large.

The Big Horn Fiber Optic Consortium Uniting Schools, Big Horn FOCUS Consortium, (Big Horn) consists of four public school districts, a tribal education department, a Head Start preschool program, a tribal college and an undergraduate college. Big Horn plans to develop six community learning centers to provide access and quality education to rural, geographically and culturally isolated communities through distance learning. The grant award will establish an Interactive Television System (ITV) that will be located at the Crow Agency hub site. The end user sites operating off the hub site are located in the schools at Pryor, Wyola, Lodge Grass, Hardin, Little Big Horn and Rocky Mountain College. The system will use asynchronous transfer mode to provide switching and transmission to the end users. VisionNet will provide the interactive television control systems for the operation. By using the grant funds to establish an ITV system, schools will be able to offer enrichment courses in fine arts, foreign language, math and science; adult education courses in business entrepreneurship, technology and family training; and seminars regarding agriculture, ranching and economic development. This project will



positively impact all rural students, including the American Indian community whose educational and economic needs are largely unmet.

St. Patrick Hospital Corporation

\$168,564 Grant / \$181,436 Loan

Total: \$350,000

Location: Missoula, Montana

Area(s) served: Missoula, Lake, and Powell

Contact Mr. Dan Reiner

Telephone Number: (406) 329-2756

Fax Number: (406) 329-2761

Congressional District(s): At Large.

St. Patrick Hospital (SPH) is a 213-bed regional trauma and tertiary care center offering a full range of inpatient and outpatient services. SPH also serves as the hub site for the Regional Health Information Network (RHIN) whose goal is to improve access and utilization of health care, health information, and education services in two western Montana counties. The end user sites will be St. Joseph Hospital in Polson on the Flathead Indian Reservation; the Arlee Family Medical Clinic in Arlee which is also on the Flathead Indian Reservation; and the Seeley-Swan Medical Center located on the northeastern edge of Missoula County. These three communities are characterized by aging populations, poor mountain roads, and significant distances to travel for specialized care. The Arlee Family Medical Clinic and the Seeley-Swan Medical Center have limited operating hours and staff; in addition, the latter facility lacks access to a radiologist. The RHIN will address these challenges through the establishment of a telemedicine network offering 24-hour teleradiology services, consultations with medical specialists, and distance learning for rural health care professionals. The benefits of the system will include shortened distances for patients to travel to receive specialized care and greater retention of rural health practitioners.

Daniels Memorial Hospital & Nursing Home

\$183,607 Grant / \$166,393 Loan

Total: \$350,000

Location: Scobey, Montana

Area(s) served: Plentywood, Polar, Wolf Point, Scobey, Glasgow, and Malta

Contact Mr. Glenn Haugo

Telephone Number: (460) 487-2296

Fax Number: (406) 487-2471

Congressional District(s): At Large.

FORTH Consortium includes six healthcare facilities in rural Northeast Montana which plan to improve rural healthcare facilities by connecting them to high quality health care services using advanced telecommunication technology. FORTH Consortium's initiative consists of installing telemedicine facilities in the end-user sites at Sheridan, Roosevelt,



Daniels, Valley and Phillips; all located in Montana. The equipment needed for this project will include interactive video equipment, an advanced transmission system using Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) on fiber optic lines, and telemedicine equipment such as X-ray scanners, digital microscopes, and teleradiology workstations. The applicant's long term goal is to provide a means for rural healthcare facilities to exchange information and obtain medical consultation with each other and with urban health care centers.

1996 Grant Awards:

(1) High Plains Education Consortium

\$224,135

Roundup, Montana

Contact Person: J. Jau Erdie

Phone Number: 406-323-1507

FAX: 406-323-1927

The High Plains Education Consortium (HPEC) is an alliance of rural school districts in central Montana eager to share limited resources to meet the changing need of the students and communities they serve. The HPEC network proposes to link five schools in central Montana with interactive television capabilities for distance learning. These schools are struggling to find ways to effectively function with declining tax bases and ever increasing costs, while trying to maintain the academic standards required today.

The applicant intends to use RUS grant funds to purchase and install ITV equipment in each participating school, utilizing existing classroom space to accommodate equipment. This equipment, linked with telephone company transmission facilities, will allow these schools to share instructional time for required course offerings that cannot be obtained by each district at its own cost. The HPEC network, using DS3 fiber optic cable will eventually link other networks in eastern Montana, Community Colleges, MSU Billings, and METNET (colleges in western Montana).

(2) Montana State University - Northern

\$278,691

Location: Havre, Montana

Contact Person: Dr. Carl Ellis

Phone Number: 406-265-4160

FAX: 406-265-3777

Seven school districts in rural north central Montana have joined Montana State University - Northern and make up the West Fiber Optic Consortium Uniting Schools (West Focus). Their purpose is to improve the educational opportunities of students, teachers and other members of the rural communities by connecting different rural areas together using advanced telecommunications. RUS grant funds requested for this project



will be used to purchase equipment for Distance Learning Classrooms and for technical training and assistance for developing distance learning programs. By forming a partnership with local telephone cooperatives and State Universities, the rural schools can afford access to information and programming using advanced telecommunications. The types of educational programs to be offered include foreign language, Computer Programming, Environmental Studies, Native American history, creative writing, vocational agriculture, and advanced placement studies in science, English, Psychology, Calculus, etc.

1995 Grant Awards:

(1) Miles Community College

Miles City

A two-way video project will enable three colleges and nine secondary schools to share resources to meet state accreditation requirements and provide college level advanced placement classes for high school students.

(2) Outlook Public Schools

Outlook

A consortium of four public school districts in northeastern Montana will share educational services to access courses in foreign languages, advanced math and others to maintain academic accreditation.

1994 Grant Awards

(1) Montana Deaconess Medical Center

Name of Project: Realizing Education and Community Health (REACH)

Whole state of Montana

RUS will provide funds to expand and enhance an existing telemedicine system which uses a personal computer-based compressed video conferencing system to provide rural-to-metropolitan physician consultation, teleradiology and other health care services to remote areas in Montana. The RUS grant will (1) provide two-way interactive video capabilities, (2) enhance the radiological quality through increase bandwidth capacity, and (3) offer a wider array of health educational programming to sites via the network. New video conferencing and teleradiological equipment will be provided to medical centers in Pondera, Teton and Cascade Counties, two medical centers in Choteau County, and to county hospitals in Glacier, Toole and Liberty Counties. In addition, several laptop computers capable of transmitting medical data to the network will be used by visiting nurses to the home for enhanced home health care services. The compressed video system will utilize T1 circuits.



(2) Scobey Public Schools

Name of Project: Fiber Optic Consortium Uniting Schools (FOCUS)
Daniels, Phillips, Roosevelt and Opheim Counties

This project unites 8 school districts K-12 in Northeastern Montana to share teachers and curricula such as foreign languages, vocational agriculture, Calculus, advanced placement Math and staff training. Other community uses include volunteer fireman training, emergency medical training, environmental training for farmers, continuing education for nurses and public accountants, local and regional government conferencing, and adult re-training and job service programs. The grant will fund interactive television equipment, distance learning classroom accessories, and computers. Nemont Telephone Cooperative, a RUS telecommunications borrower, will be providing the transmission facilities for the system's broad transmission pathway incorporating state-of-the-art DS3 circuits.

1993 Grant Awards:

(1) Eastern Montana Telemedicine Network (EMTN)

Yellowstone, Roosevelt, Carter, Dawson

Prior to 1994, whenever a resident in eastern rural Montana needed specialized health care, they were sent to the nearest metropolitan area 225 miles away from home to Billings, Montana. The population of these communities is 47,717 residents. In 1992, five medical and mental health facilities from the communities of Culbertson, Glendive, Helena, Miles City, and Sidney transferred 904 patients to Billings because neither the advanced technology or the medical specialists were available to treat these patients in their communities. Thanks to interactive television, fiber optics, and funding from the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), quality health care is now more accessible in eastern Montana.

In September 1993, the Eastern Montana Telemedicine Network (EMTN) was awarded a \$482,910 Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant. The funds purchased video conferencing and network termination hardware for a telemedicine system which connects these five rural medical facilities to Billings for healthcare services.

Telemedicine allows a patient and primary physician in rural areas to consult with a specialist through two-way video and audio communication. It enables a physician to conduct a clinical examination of a patient across great distances and deliver their expertise where it's needed, when it's needed, regardless of geography. Telemedicine also reduces the high cost of health care. One such example involves a family physician whose patient had a cervical spine fracture. Unsure whether the patient needed air ambulance transport from Culbertson to Billings over 100 miles away, the primary provider was able to consult with a neurosurgeon in Billings. They reviewed the patient's x-rays and CAT scan, and jointly determined that while the patient did need prompt referral he did not need to be transported by air ambulance. The patient was spared a \$3,500 medical expense. By 1995 the number of patients that had to be transferred to



specialists in Billings decreased by 25%. Over a period of 20 months, 299 medical consultations have taken place and patients have saved approximately \$63,000 in travel and hospital costs. All of the physicians have been retained in the 5 communities and 1 more has been recruited into the service area.

In September 1995, EMTN connected four rural high schools separated by 170 miles to begin providing continuing education courses. The curriculum includes advanced courses which are intended to assist students to meet Montana's new and more demanding college requirements. Additionally, advanced courses offered by two-way interactive video conferencing originating from Miles Community College 105 miles away from Glendive have enabled two nursing students to fulfill their clinical and course curriculum in the same location.

RUS funding of the EMTN's medical link and distance learning projects has been an important part of bridging the miles to link Montana's remote health care facilities and classrooms to the rest of the world.

(2) Richey School District, Yellowstone Education Symposium
Richey

School districts in Circle, Glendive, Lambert, Richey, Savage and Sidney, will be electronically joined together in an interactive educational network to share teachers, curriculum and other educational resources.