

Elk Valley Rancheria, California



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May 3, 2010

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Ian Martinez
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington D.C. 20230

Re: "Northern California Open Community Fiber Network" Project; Recommend


Dear Mr. Martinez:

The Elk Valley Rancheria, California ("Tribe"), a federally recognized Indian tribe, thanks you for the opportunity to comment on Broadband Technology Opportunities Program ("BTOP") projects that affect tribal lands, and specifically those lands or areas that are important to the Tribe. The Tribe recommends the *Northern California Open Community Fiber Network* (Easygrants ID: 7229; Applicant: Redwood Telephone L.L.C.; Project Type: CCI) project.

Del Norte County is considered one of California's most disadvantaged communities with poverty and unemployment rates among the State's highest. Despite this, Del Norte County is increasingly becoming a critical employment and health services hub: more people travel into the County for employment on a daily basis than leave it; and its primary medical facility, Sutter Coast Hospital, services a high number of non-local residents from coastal southern Oregon. In addition, the Tribe, through its enterprises, is a major regional employer and a significant development partner in the community.

Del Norte County is served by a single high speed fiber line running from the north and terminating in Crescent City approximately 19 miles south of the Oregon border. Lack of route redundancy seriously impacts telemedicine and distance learning activity in the region and restricts the ability of public safety departments to deliver guaranteed enforcement services. In addition, most of the southern portion of Del Norte County – along U.S. Highway 101 - has no broadband connection, which





effective isolates an Indian Health Services provider, two schools, several tourism related businesses and approximately 1,000 residents from the rest of the County.

The Tribe recommends the application by Redwood Telephone L.L.C. to provide middle and last-mile broadband services. In particular, the Tribe views as critical the ability to provide route redundancy to our community by bridging the middle mile connection between Crescent City and northern parts of adjacent Humboldt County along U.S. Highway 101; and in the process providing broadband access to key public institutions and private enterprise along U.S. Highway 101. This approach is also consistent with Del Norte County's "HAS199.COM" (Harbor / Airport / Sewer / Hwy 199 / Broadband) infrastructure strategy that mandates highly robust and redundant broadband as a key growth driver for Del Norte County. If funded, the Tribe would be able to connect a number of its buildings and homes in areas that are un-served or underserved. The Tribe also intends to take advantage of connections with other Tribes for the provision of distance learning services and programs.

Again, the Tribe recommends this application and we encourage the review committee to visit our community and see first-hand the impact that robust and redundant broadband would have on Del Norte County.

Sincerely,



Dale A. Miller
Chairman

cc: Scott Joachim, Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria

