

Draft: 7/29/09

C. Executive Summary (2 pages): **Maine Library Learning Network**

Rural libraries in Maine, which currently serve as an access point to free Internet service for their communities, can provide an avenue for Internet training and education on 21st century broadband services. *Librarians are well positioned to educate and train individuals on the benefits of Internet access, but can only do so if they themselves are digitally literate.* The goal of this proposal is to establish a Maine Library Learning Network by connecting eight public libraries to Maine's advanced, high speed, fiber optic network and equip them with Public Computer Center Hubs. We will also connect and equip Local Public Library Computer Centers in xxxx libraries positioned to access Maine's proposed "middle mile" broadband network. The Center Hubs will deliver a curriculum of broadband training and education for librarians and patrons to the Local Centers.

Eight Center Hubs will be connected to Maine's Research and Education Network (MaineREN), an advanced, high-speed, fiber-optic network that serves Maine's research and education institutions. The first section of the MaineREN network, Bar Harbor to Portland, is now fully operational and interconnects many of Maine's institutions of higher education, both public and private, and not-for-profit research entities. The Center Hubs will be located in public libraries where facilities and staffing are sufficient to conduct broadband education for librarians and the general public.

Maine's proposed "middle mile" broadband network will provide access for 109 communities and 645 critical community organizations. The Library Learning Network project proposes to connect xx public libraries in these communities that are located in rural, under populated and remote parts of Maine. These Local Centers will serve estimated xxxx potential users who lack Internet services at home or at work, and live in areas where there is a high poverty level in the community. As part of the our project approximately xxx miles of fiber optic cable will be installed to connect libraries the "last mile" needed to access "middle mile" infrastructure, thereby enabling access to training and education that the project will develop and deliver through the Center Hub curriculum, and the larger world of broadband services.

Many librarians and their communities new to the potential of broadband connectivity are challenged by it, and lack the digital literacy and digital media skills to educate and train individuals on the benefits of Internet access and accessing specific information. Broadband is changing how we communicate with each other, how and where we work, how we educate our children, and how we entertain ourselves. In rural communities broadband is particularly critical where advanced communications can shrink the distances that isolate remote communities. The focus of our Internet education program will be general digital literacy and the many Internet-based resources that can benefit users, such as access to healthcare information, education of children and adults, financial planning, online banking, online shopping, e-mail, employment opportunities, and civic and e-government online services. Custom training to serve the disabled will be included in the curriculum.

The centers will be equipped with two computers (?) and upgrades to existing computers where needed. An interactive video system will connect the Center Hubs for the creation distribution and archiving of training and educational materials, and will be accessible from the Local Centers via in-house computers. Both Hub and Local public computer centers have been certified compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and will be equipped with public access computers and custom workstations equipped to serve the disabled. The estimated population to be served by the computer centers is: XX

Oversight of the project will be through Maine InfoNet representing the Maine State Library. The organization is an established collaborative of libraries and cultural heritage organizations that have agreed to share collections and information technology, and a proven leader in promoting resource sharing and high quality, cost-effective information service solutions. The organization evolved over a decade into a formalized partnership in 2006 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Maine System Libraries and the Maine State Library to share staff, funding and infrastructure to develop and support a digital library for Maine. Maine InfoNet develops and manages consortial services that unite electronic and physical resources. These services include a union catalog of four million records of the holdings in Maine's collections, fifty-two electronic databases licensed for the statewide use, and a gateway to digital resources in all formats. For over a decade the University of Maine System (UMS) Libraries have spearheaded a variety of new technology projects that encompassed the creation and delivery of digital content in all formats, and developed the infrastructure to support it.

Key Project Team:

- Jeffrey Letourneau, Associate Director Communications and Networking Services (UMS), has been instrumental in building (MaineREN), as well as the school and library network (MSLN).
- Linda Lord, Interim Maine State Librarian
- James Jackson-Sanborn, Executive Director, Maine InfoNet
- Marilyn Lutz, Director Library Information Systems, Maine InfoNet
- Janet McKenney
- Ellen Wood
- Barbara McDade, Bangor Public Library

Location of Computing Centers: York, Portland, Lewiston, Augusta, Bangor, Presque Isle, Farmington, Calais

Location of libraries to be connected: the number to be determined based on budget and library confirmation

Estimated Budget: \$1,000,000