



Access Humboldt

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March 24, 2010

Broadband Initiatives Program
Rural Utilities Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture,
1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Stop 1599, Room 2868
Washington, DC 20250

RE: Hoopa Valley Tribe's Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) Application - HoopaNet

Access Humboldt hereby affirms our strong support and intended partnership with the Hoopa Valley Tribe's application to RUS for wireless last mile broadband infrastructure for the HoopaNet project in Humboldt County, California.

Humboldt County's remote north-eastern town of Orleans, known as Panamnik, and the nearby Hoopa Valley are two of the least-served areas in all of California. Not only is broadband substantially unavailable to both communities, but even basic phone service is frequently lost in Orleans because of the fragility of the phone company's infrastructure at the edge of their service area.

The proposed HoopaNet project will bring much-needed broadband service to the area and benefit both Hoopa and Karuk Tribal members among the residents, businesses and community anchor institutions who are currently unserved. Robust broadband connections will help local residents to have equal opportunities to develop home-based businesses and to access important educational prospects.

The FCC recently released a notice stating that broadband deployment on Tribal lands is less than 10 percent. Deploying community broadband and local media access to the Tribal government facilities, businesses and residents in these remote parts of Humboldt County will provide improved health care, education, job training, and public safety services where most needed.

If the Hoopa Valley Tribe's application and our Humboldt Community Access Network are funded, our intended partnership will include placing appropriate infrastructure on Tribal land to provide middle mile services to support HoopaNet and the community anchor institutions of Orleans and Hoopa Valley. Access Humboldt will also dedicate staff time to support deployment and operation of community broadband and media access services in Orleans and Hoopa Valley, important members of our regional community.

Please approve funding for the Hoopa Valley Tribe's proposal to build HoopaNet and provide affordable access to essential broadband and high speed Internet in Humboldt County.

Sincerely,

Sean McLaughlin
Executive Director