



Champion Report

Theme Area: **Connectivity**

Cheryal Hills, Pam Mahling, Janelle Riley, Kevin Larson, Kristi Westbrook, Stacey Stockdill, Sally Fineday, Paul Drange, Anna Gruber, Janet Johnson, Rich Utech, Matt Killian, Mary Gottsch, Sheila Haverkamp, Megan Rehbein, Maureen Ideker and Brenda Thomas

REPORTING PERIOD:

January 1, 2016 through March 22, 2016

What NEW success have you had in moving your theme goals forward over the reporting period?

Goal 1: All Action Steps	Over the past 2 years, NJPA has provided \$200,000 in support and assisted the Virtual Highway Project team in many ways. These are highlighted below:
	Leveraged \$7.9 Million for the Region through State of Minnesota Broadband Fiber Projects. 1. DEED to CTC (\$2 Million from DEED with \$2.22 Million Match by CTC) 2. DEED to CTC (\$759,525 from DEED and \$839,472 match by CTC); 3. DEED to WCTA (\$193,515 from DEED and \$1,925,503 match by WCTA)
	Telehealth Meetings: NJPA provided a convenient centrally located meeting room for a 2014 Resilient Region telehealth meeting that brought together healthcare stakeholders from around the region to learn about telehealth applications, new federal funding opportunities, and discuss current barriers to implementation. Key findings from this meeting were submitted to state and federal representatives and the Minnesota Broadband Task Force.
	Regional Planning: NJPA staff contributed many hours participating in regional broadband planning meetings, learning about this complex issue and helping to search for solutions.
	Videographer Internship: WCEDA received an NJPA grant to support a videographer internship working with Central Lakes College and the West Central Economic Development Alliance showcasing local businesses and regional amenities with professionally created youtube videos.
	Wi-fi mapping project. Through support of an NJPA intern and funding support from the Initiative Foundation, WCEDA finished mapping all businesses and amenities in the Sebekka and Menahga communities.
	The Resilient Region Connectivity/Virtual Highway Taskforce was successful in becoming a Blandin Broadband Community. In March, 2015, the team held a visioning session and from that a number of projects received funding. To date, \$64,500 has been invested in the region with often a 50/50 match. The Resilient Region BBC reports follow.

How are you working with any of the other RR Theme areas?

Many Resilient Region Champions continue to write letters of support for State Broadband grants. Thank you!!

List any Goals or Recommendations within the plan that your team are struggling to address?

How to truly serve the needs of the region and make sure that the system is sustainable and scale-able.

Dashboard: Strengthening Broadband Access, Subscription and Sophistication in the Region

\$3.2 Million used to retain High-Skill High-Telecommunications Jobs in the Region; Increased access to High-Speed Internet for 891 households and businesses; Fairview Township better able to Respond to Emergencies; Increased Access and Technology Skill development for 122 Low Income Families (50 Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and 70 in Distributed by The Shop in Brainerd); 3,000 pounds of electronic waste recycled in 2015; 64 Stakeholders from around the region learned about telehealth opportunities; 8 teachers have increased sophistication and now have access to SMARTboard and ipads to enhance learning in Brainerd Public Schools Early Childhood Program; Tech Services Marketing Plan has the potential to further promote and strengthen the High-Tech Service Sector in the Region; BLAEDC/Chamber offices will provide access to video conferencing; On April 8th M State, Wadena Campus, will host "What the Tech?" to provide an opportunity for community members to explore how technology can improve their life and living.



BLANDIN BROADBAND COMMUNITIES

Quarterly Narrative Report

Reports are due by the last day of each calendar quarter (March 31, June 30, September 30, December 31).

Organization Name: Resilient Region Connectivity/Virtual Highway

Report Completed By: Dr. Stacey Stockdill

Date Submitted: March 30, 2016

PC's FOR PEOPLE:

The 50 PCs have been donated to the LLBO and Leech Lake Boys and Girls Club project

BLANDIN FOUNDATION-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS:

March 11, 2015

Final Report

Project Name “Learn How to Add Telehealth to your Healthcare Setting”

Report Submitted by: Maureen Ideker, Director of Telehealth, Essentia Health

Project Description: Five Central MN Counties located in the “Resilient Region 5 Development “ area will be offered education sessions on the basics of Telehealth and how to implement services.

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Current Status: % complete: 100%

Significant accomplishments this reporting period: This grant project’s goals and objectives have been completed as of this report. The reconciliation of the budget needs to be completed yet and turned in to the Blandin Foundation. All 7 classes have been conducted at the five Resilient Region 5 counties and 64 attended. The interactions and collaboration remained at a very high level in all the classes. The evaluations were all positive and feedback for changes were incorporated into each upcoming class.

Challenges encountered during this reporting period and/or anticipated during the next period: The class sizes varied from 2 to 25 attendees. One class in Morrison County had no one sign-up and needed to be rescheduled; it ended up with 25 attendees. One challenging aspect of each class was working with the varying levels of audio-visual and videoconferencing capability. It all worked out in the end, but assistance was really necessary at each site. Volunteers from the specific sites were very helpful.

One challenge that was encountered was assembling the invitation list for each county. It required much more time and hands-on work than anticipated. To assure participation individual contacts were needed to recruit appropriate and targeted professionals. Professional relationships helped with this and many phone calls and e-mails contacts were needed.

Please comment on any ways in which Blandin staff/consultants might provide assistance or value to project implementation: Blandin was helpful in terms of communication on the Blog of upcoming classes. In looking back, a mailing list from Blandin might have helped. Instead, a Region 5 list was used, but it was very outdated.

Is there anything else about this project about which Blandin Foundation should be aware? Attendees did express appreciation for these classes and the Blandin sponsorship.

Please comment on anything you’re learning that might impact project implementation or outcomes. Budget may not have reflected the time allocations correctly, main staff and preparation time was under-estimated.

BLANDIN FOUNDATION-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS:

March 16, 2015

Final Report

Project Name – Early Childhood Project

Report Submitted by: Kristi Westbrook, Chief Operations Officers, Consolidated Telephone Company (CTC)

Grant Amount: \$5,000

Current Status: % complete: 100%

The Early Childhood Project (Update). The youngest learners in the ISD 181 school district are utilizing the SMART boards that were installed on August 11, 2015. The 4 SMART boards were installed with projectors for the ECFE program. All 8 teachers were trained on SMART board on August 24th for 3 hours by a district employee. Ongoing trainings and teacher collaboration regarding the implementation of the SMART board in the classroom will continue during teachers' professional learning communities. The district will also review how implementation is going and teacher comfort level to determine if future full group trainings are needed.

Teachers have learned how to create learning tools and lessons on the SMARTboard to allow students to manipulate and work on the screen. All SMARTboard classrooms have created check in procedures using the board as well as many other visual opportunities like picture schedules and visual timers that are very helpful for preschool aged children.

Six Mini ipads have arrived and need to be assigned out to teachers. ISD181 lead teacher, Tahnee Flowers, has worked with CTC to create specific training modules. CTC has created those videos which will be very helpful for teachers to review at their leisure and refer to as they work with the device. Ms. Flowers goal is to provide some optional after school times for teachers with ipads to gather together and explore on the ipads together.

Our goal is to continue to integrate learning opportunities using the SMARTboard and ipads and increase staff's comfort level with the technology throughout this school year.

Superintendent Bob Gross stopped by while the classroom was learning about the letter Bb so he wrote his name on the SMARTboard for everyone to see. The one of the boy drawing a person was an extension to the mat man create where they built it and then made their own person.



Teachers have continued to seek funding to upgrade technology in their classrooms.
<http://www.brainerddispatch.com/news/3743532-grants-boost-technology-isd-181-classrooms>

An updated report regarding the value of this program came from Tahnee Flowers, Early Childhood Coordinator, Brainerd Public Schools:

Things are going very well with the new technology! Devices are working great. We have had more training from our district technology team around implementation and integration.

Since our Blandin grant we have also secured a Brainerd Public Schools Foundation grant as well as a personal donation to purchase additional ipads so that every teacher now has an ipad. We also purchased blue tooth speakers and 2 apple tv devices. Blandin was the catalyst that has helped us accomplish some of our long term technology goals in early childhood. We are excited to continue our implementation using what we have learned and experienced using the devices purchased with your generous grant dollars.

*Here are a couple of recent classroom stories using the technology:
One preschool room spend time learning the "3 little pigs" story. They learned about props and characters of a story. They developed the props and practiced acting out the play. The teachers were able to record the students acting out the play using the ipad from the Blandin grant and email it to the parents. They also had a "movie showing" on their classroom SMARTboard so that the class could watch themselves acting out the play. The children and parents loved it!*

One preschool class was talking about building towers etc. and the conversation came up about a wrecking ball. Many of the children did not know what a wrecking ball was. The teacher used her SMARTboard to show the class videos of a wrecking ball in action. The kids loved it and wanted to make their own wrecking ball. So they got a ball and a string and made their own wrecking ball. During station time groups of kids worked together to build towers and buildings and use the wrecking ball to crash them down.

These are a couple stories of many great things happening in our classrooms using technology to expand on the learning going on.

BLANDIN FOUNDATION-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS:

March 10, 2015

Project Name - Enhanced Marketing of Our Technology Sector

Report Submitted by: Sheila Haverkamp, Executive Director, and Megan Rehbein, Office Administrator, Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corporation

Project Description:

This proposed project will continue developing and implementing our Tech Services marketing plan with high priorities around awareness building and advertising. This grant would help us to market and enhance our website and to explore possibilities for billboards and other avenues of marketing.

Grant Amount: \$4,000

Current Status: 10% complete

Significant accomplishments this reporting period:

Sheila and Megan have met to review the Tech Services Marketing plan for 2016. We will be meeting with our marketing consultant to update the Tech Services Marketing plan in the next few weeks. We will also be updating our Tech Sector portion of the BLAEDC website with up-to-date, relevant information related to Tech Services. We have also been meeting with the Crosslake EDC and will be exploring ways we can highlight tech services specific to the Crosslake area.

Challenges encountered during this reporting period and/or anticipated during the next period:

We have not had any challenges at this point/

Please comment on any ways in which Blandin staff/consultants might provide assistance or value to project implementation:

We do not need assistance at this time.

Is there anything else about this project about which Blandin Foundation should be aware?

Not at this time.

Please comment on anything you're learning that might impact project implementation or outcomes.

BLANDIN FOUNDATION-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS:

March 10, 2016

Project Name - Video Conferencing System in CTC Technology Room at the BLAEDC/Chamber Facility
Report Submitted by: Sheila Haverkamp, Executive Director, and Megan Rehbein, Office Administrator, Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corporation

Original Project Description:

This project will enhance the “CTC Technology Room” at the BLAEDC/Chamber offices by bringing video conferencing, face to face connectivity, and remote presentation capabilities connecting key rural business entities and their members. This video conferencing initiative will allow access for one-on-one meetings, for daily business operations, or the opportunity for online presentations. The project will include the installation of two high definition pan and tilt cameras, a computer controlled meeting interface, a cloud based Managed Video Hosting, and a flexible audio system to accommodate small to large group meetings and presentations.

Grant Amount: \$7,500

Current Status: 10% complete

Significant accomplishments this reporting period:

BLAEDC, the Brainerd Lakes Chamber, CTC and a Marco representative met on February 29, 2016 to review the plan of the Video Conferencing System installation. The Marco representative informed us that the system would work better in a smaller setting, and it was decided that we move the system to the RiverWood Bank room. Sheila has since connected with Diana Daigle and Mary Magnuson to approve the change of location for the system. We are waiting on an “Okay” from Blandin and then we will proceed with the installation.

Update: March 11, 2016 – We have received approval for the change to the RiverWood Bank room as of today.

Challenges encountered during this reporting period and/or anticipated during the next period:

The main challenge we encountered was realizing the system provided by Marco would not sufficiently meet the needs of the large CTC Training Room. Instead it was proposed that we move the system into the small RiverWood Bank Room.

Please comment on any ways in which Blandin staff/consultants might provide assistance or value to project implementation:

At this point, we are just waiting for Blandin to approve the change.

Is there anything else about this project about which Blandin Foundation should be aware?

Not at this time.

Please comment on anything you’re learning that might impact project implementation or outcomes.

BLANDIN FOUNDATION-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS:

March 7, 2016

Project Name: PCs for People Youth Project @ The Shop.

Report Submitted by: Cindy Moore, Executive Director, The Shop

Grant Amount: \$500

Current Status: New Resilient Region BBC Project

The PCs for People Youth Project @ The Shop is up and running. As we began our 3rd year in January of 2016 we have 2 part time staff, a second year VISTA member, 2 youth from Rural MN CEP Youth Services and our advisor to help on the repair side. We have averaged 7 youth from alternative schools who participate each semester on Thursday from 9 to 11 developing workplace skills and learning computer refurbishing.

Beginning with January 2014 we opened with 80 desktops from Staples and have received 141 desktop donations. Laptops donations are 154 with the bulk coming in January of 2016. Unfortunately, our metrics are blended with St Paul. We recently have taken the extra steps to collect our own data by doubling up and inputting paper documents into our data sheets.

Distributions to low income families and individuals in 2015:

55 Desktops and 17 laptops. Families from Mille Lacs, Princeton, Garrison, Motley, Deerwood, Pine River, Aitkin, Crosby, Staples, Duluth and the Brainerd /Baxter area have received PC4P computers. We recorded 18 repairs with about a dozen others not billed for as new computer owners often need a little help to get up and running.

We have recorded over 3000 pounds of electronic waste going to our recycler in 2015.

BLANDIN FOUNDATION-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS:

March 15, 2016

Project Name – “What the Tech?” Technology Expo

Report Submitted by: Janet Johnson, Instructor – Network Technology, Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State)

Project Description: M State Wadena campus is hosting “What the Tech?” technology expo giving businesses and community organizations the opportunity to demonstrate the technology they have available to help community members improve their life and living.

Grant Amount: \$9950.00

Current Status: 50 % complete

Significant accomplishments this reporting period:

1. We have scheduled the M State commons area for the exhibit floor, 3 classrooms for training, the computer lab in hopes of hosting an elementary class for a one-hour of code event.
2. We sent out the press release to six Region V chamber of commerce and 30 + businesses. We have 15 confirmed Exhibitors. The exhibitor business areas include – Broadband, Banking and Security, Fitness and Wellness, Home Health Care, Local Technology Companies Friendly Rider Services, Advertising, Education. We received verbal commitments from Todd Wadena Electric and Wadena City Water and Light.
3. Eight exhibitors have requested training sessions.
4. Marketing for the event has started with Maslowski Wellness and Friendly Rider both agreeing to market the event and M State and West Central Telephone identifying market sources and beginning the design for the posters/flyers. M State is marketing on Social Media. The Wadena Pioneer Journal will have a two-page article and ad in the March 26 release of Rural Living Magazine. A picture showing the marketing ad is included at the bottom of this report.
5. The food is ordered – Hotdogs, chips, carrots and cookie plus water to drink.
6. Students have met with the college IT to identify security requirements for connectivity through the college network and are working on network design. Using Google Docs, they created the on-line exhibitor registration form and the exit surveys for both community members and exhibitors. Students are working to create surveys for training sessions.

Exhibitor Registration Link is below:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1MXyRe2OX0NTrfDLtbpom5AJdVWwq89T_wFiwrrMLkKE/viewform?usp=send_form

7. Students are working to finalize the equipment list, which is subject to exhibitor’s needs and pricing for the equipment. We have ordered and received a Raspberry Pi3 to see if it will work for exhibitor tables – the Operating Systems seems limited on Internet Browser capabilities, but they are continuing to test.

Challenges encountered during this reporting period and/or anticipated during the next period:

We are working with 3M to see if they will exhibit. Also working with representatives from Agriculture but the timing puts them in the field by April 8. Energy companies have verbally committed, but have not submitted the exhibitor registration form. Electrical conference in Minneapolis the same day – no one available to exhibit.

Exhibitors seem a bit unsure of what Technology to exhibit. We hope the community will be excited and not intimidated by the topic of the event and the thought of technology.

Please comment on any ways in which Blandin staff/consultants might provide assistance or value to project implementation:

They have provided ideas, names and contact information for exhibitors.

Is there anything else about this project about which Blandin Foundation should be aware?

The service providers in the area are excited to have the opportunity to share their technologies, this is a new opportunity offered in the area. Area businesses are reaching out to us to request the opportunity to exhibit.

Please comment on anything you’re learning that might impact project implementation or outcomes.

Some of the exhibitors seem a bit tentative when trying to understand exactly what we mean by “Technology.” We are hoping the public is excited about the opportunity and will not find the event intimidating.



BLANDIN FOUNDATION-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS:

Request Submitted to Blandin Foundation (with a copy to the BBC Steering Committee) on February 23, 2015 by: Sally Fineday, Wireless Communications Business Manager, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

Request of the Blandin Foundation to Redirect the “LLBO Replicates the Shop” grant to the LLBO a PCs for People Affiliate

Overview

Due to many obstacles of the LLBO/Boys and Girl’s Club “Replicate the Shop” model, this request is made to redirect the Resilient Region Blandin Broadband Community funds from the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (LLBO) & Boys and Girls Club “Replicate The Shop” project to the LLBO becoming an affiliate member of the PCs for People of St. Paul. The remaining funds will be used to support the PCs for People membership training and refurbishing equipment. LLBO and Pcs for People will bring low cost communication equipment to low income families in the tribal lands fulfilling the grant’s purpose to increase digital inclusion and decrease digital literacy.

Start date – February 1, 2016

End date – June 30, 2016

Fiscal Year Start – July

Fiscal Year end – June

Total Project Budget - \$26,000
\$10,000

Amount requested from Blandin -

Organizational budget - \$304,681

Organizational Information – same

Why the LLBO is best positioned to accomplish this grant activity and how will it be implemented?

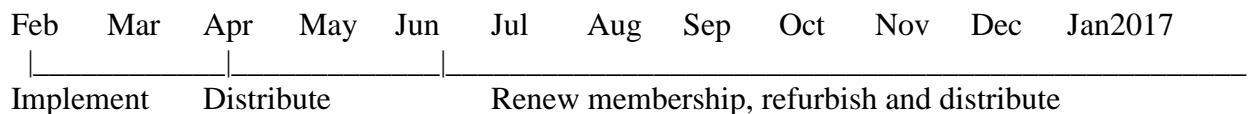
The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (LLBO) has responded to the lack of affordable broadband capacity in the tribal lands by developing and implementing its own telecommunications company in 2013. The company provides fixed wireless internet to citizens residing in the tribal lands. The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe’s (LLBO) telecommunications company has been successful with its model in the cities of Cass Lake and Bena in meeting the needs of low income household in the tribal lands.

This plan includes the LLBO’s telecom company and the Tribal College Library. The Leech Lake Telecom already sells low cost fixed wireless broadband to low income families and will be the distributor of refurbished computers. In addition, the Resilient Region Blandin Broadband Community had received a donation of 50 computers with their grant and have agreed to give the 50 computers to the LLBO broadband project. Citizens who receive the first 50 computers at no cost in exchange will be required to take a basic computer skills test at the Tribal College. Below are important background information with regard to this project:

- The Telecom office, located at 207 Second Street, Cass Lake, MN, maintains a 20 x 20’ room to refurbish computers; and a 6 x 10’ locked storage room to ensure safekeeping of the refurbished equipment.
- The Telecom is a company owned and operated by the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and will conduct all fiscal transactions via its Accounting Division.

- Sally Fineday, Business Manager of the Telecom, will be developing and managing the PCs for People Implementation; monitoring and reporting, and securing funding to sustain the Affiliate membership.
- Richard Schulman and David DeVault, Technical Specialists of the Telecom, will provide technical support and conduct the refurbishing process.
- Karmen Fairbanks, Administrative Assistant of the Telecom, conducts store front operations for the Telecom, will now also do so for the PCs for People.
- Hannah Buckland, Librarian, Leech Lake Tribal College, will develop and implement a free basic computer and internet class at the Library and will provide the class to citizens who receive a Blandin Resilient Region donated computer at zero cost to the first 50 low income citizens.
- The Telecom will market the first 50 computers with radio announcements & local newspaper notices (KOJB radio and Debahjimon newspaper).

Timeline



Assessment

The distribution of the initial 50 computers (donated to the LLBO will be distributed “free of charge” to low income families in exchange for their participation with one basic computer skills class held at the Tribal College Library. The number of computers distributed and the number of class participants will be the measurement of success for digital inclusion and digital literacy of this project. Ensearch, Inc. will assist with the development of a brief evaluation that will be administered upon class completion. After the first 50 computers are distributed, low income families will be charged a reasonable rate, accordingly with the PCs for People model.

Conclusion

The primary goals are to increase digital literacy and decrease the digital divide in the LLBO tribal lands. The partnerships with this grant project are the LLBO, LL Telecom, LL Tribal College, Resilient Region, EnSearch, Inc. and PCs for People; this project will add value to the LLBO and Resilient Region Blandin Broadband Communities by creating a means for low income families to access necessary computer equipment to adopt their broadband capacity.

Budget

Original grant to Replicate the Shop	\$	Revised to implement PCs for People	\$
PCs for People Affiliate fees and expenses	5,000	PCs for People Affiliate	7,500
Vista Fees	2,500	Vista Fees (expended)	2,500
Boys and Girls administration	750		0
LLBO Administration and travel	1,750		0
Inkind LLBO & B&G Club inkind supervision of VISTA (2600) & space for VISTA & Project (2500)	5100	Telecom space (refurbish & locked storage) 260 hours donated time (design forms, monitor, reporting and refurbishing operations)	10,800
			5,200
TOTAL	15,100		26,000

Resilient Region Plan: Connectivity

Connectivity Issue

Connectivity: Extending high-speed internet access to the entire region increases telecommuting opportunities, provides greater access to customers and markets for businesses, and allows all residents access to civic resources and commerce.

Connectivity Issue Goal

Connectivity: The number of households in the region served by high-speed internet-services rises from the current level of 40% to 95% served. The (region/rural areas) community is willing to invest to increase coverage. This will include both public and private investment in service.

Action Step 1A

Access: Promote, support and develop high-speed internet access throughout region for telecommuting, educational benefits, and supporting business activity.

Recommendation 2

Efficiency: Local units of governments will work across political boundaries to share equipment costs/facilities for more efficient delivery of high-speed internet.

Action Step 2A

Efficiency in installation: Lay conduit for fiber optics when upgrading sewer and water or digging trench.

Recommendation 3

Access for entrepreneurs: Provide access to technology needs and support to retain businesses and encourage potential entrepreneurs

Action Step 3A

Economic development: Determine the compatibility and interface between communications, smart grid technologies, and internet systems. Develop a recruiting initiative encouraging technology-oriented companies to explore opportunities offered in non-urban spaces.

Telecommuting: Create a business plan that facilitates legitimate telecommuting jobs and promotes high-speed internet connection in the region. Upgrade and expand high-speed internet infrastructure in housing so residents may work from home.

Action Step 3C

Map of access sites: Develop map or list of accessible sites within region to conduct web-type meetings, free Wi-Fi etc.

Action Step 3B

Recommendation 4

Access for children: All school aged children will have access to a computer with high-speed internet capabilities.

Action Step 4A

Support sites: Make available sites providing educational, internet, support, financial resources, etc.

Recommendation 5

Funding: Identify and pursue state, federal, and philanthropic grants to fund connectivity recommendations.