

By: Keffer of Eastland, Christian, Seaman

H.B. No. 3325

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation and administration of the community telecommunications alliance program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 487, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter N to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER N. COMMUNITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS ALLIANCE PROGRAM

Sec. 487.601. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Community telecommunications alliance" means an association of public and private entities created to share resources, promote innovative school health technology, promote economic development opportunities for the community, and improve the overall quality of life within a local community.

(2) "Program" means the community telecommunications alliance program.

Sec. 487.602. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING. (a) The office and the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board by rule shall adopt a memorandum of understanding establishing the community telecommunications alliance program. The program shall:

(1) assist local communities in the creation and development of community telecommunications alliances by providing advice and assistance to support the assessment of local demands, needs, or uses of telecommunications and information services in conjunction with the private sector;

1 (2) assist community telecommunications alliances in
2 applying for grant funding for projects, including:

3 (A) assisting alliances in securing matching
4 private sector funding for projects; and

5 (B) requiring alliances to develop sustainable
6 plans:

7 (i) that demonstrate how the alliance will
8 continue services once the grant funding terminates; and

9 (ii) that do not result in direct
10 competition with local businesses and telecommunications and
11 information services providers;

12 (3) assist community telecommunications alliances in
13 facilitating access to telecommunications and information services
14 for local communities to promote rural economic development; and

15 (4) create rural pilot projects to develop innovative
16 school health technology projects.

17 (b) Each community telecommunications alliance established
18 under this section shall have an advisory council with
19 representation from each of the following:

20 (1) a local nonprofit organization;

21 (2) a local county-elected official;

22 (3) a local city-elected official;

23 (4) a local telecommunications provider;

24 (5) a local economic development group;

25 (6) the local financial community; and

26 (7) a local information services provider.

27 (c) Eligibility for private network services under this

1 section is limited to the entities listed in Sections 58.253(a) and
2 59.072(a), Utilities Code, as appropriate.

3 (d) A community telecommunications alliance shall make
4 available the opportunity for public and school libraries, public
5 and nonprofit health care facilities, and local institutions of
6 higher education to be included in the community telecommunications
7 alliance.

8 Sec. 487.603. REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE. Not later than
9 January 1 of each odd-numbered year, the office shall submit to the
10 legislature a report detailing the grant activities of the program
11 and grant recipients. The report must include:

12 (1) the criteria used to quantify the effect grant
13 funds had in advancing telecommunications connectivity and
14 technology;

15 (2) data and performance measures used to quantify the
16 achievement of program objectives; and

17 (3) a description of and results from a grant
18 monitoring risk assessment and on-site review process.

19 SECTION 2. Section 57.047(c), Utilities Code, is amended to
20 read as follows:

21 (c) In awarding a grant or loan under this subchapter, the
22 board shall give priority to a project or proposal that:

23 (1) represents collaborative efforts involving more
24 than one school, university, or library;

25 (2) contributes matching funds from another source;

26 (3) shows promise of becoming self-sustaining;

27 (4) helps users of information learn new ways to

1 acquire and use information through telecommunications;

2 (5) extends specific educational information and
3 knowledge services to a group not previously served, especially a
4 group in a rural, ~~or~~ remote, or economically depressed area;

5 (6) results in more efficient or effective learning
6 than through conventional teaching;

7 (7) improves the effectiveness and efficiency of
8 health care delivery; ~~or~~

9 (8) takes advantage of distance learning
10 opportunities in a rural or urban school district with a:

11 (A) disproportionate number of at-risk youths;

12 or

13 (B) high dropout rate; or

14 (9) was developed in connection with a community
15 telecommunications alliance program created under Subchapter N,
16 Chapter 487, Government Code.

17 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2003.