

**TOP FY 2000
Project Narrative**

Suquamish Indian Tribe

**Grant # 53-60-00024
Suquamish, WA**

“To establish itself as a true independent sovereign nation, the Suquamish Tribe envisions a financially independent nation of people living on the Port Madison Indian Reservation, which is wholly owned and controlled by members who are grounded in their culture, drug and alcohol free, educated, healthy, and economically independent.”

The Suquamish Tribe Vision Statement

This vision statement was voted on by the Suquamish People. We believe that our government should do all it can to develop programs that will nurture this vision to become a reality. *RezNet*: The Suquamish Electronic Nation Mobile Project is a step toward achieving our vision statement. Through access to technology, we hope to provide the resources for Tribal members to become more “educated and economically independent.”

Currently, these are still challenging problems. The 1998 Indian Service Population & Labor Force Estimate Report (Attachment XII) states that of the 1,188 employed Native Americans on the Port Madison Indian Reservation (a map is provided as Attachment IX), 704 or 60% are still below the poverty line, indicating that many have low-paying, entry-level jobs. This can be correlated to the low scholastic achievement of Suquamish Tribal youth in the public school system. North Kitsap School District Superintendent, Dr. Eugene Medina, states in his letter of partnership (Attachment XIII) that Suquamish students score consistently lower than district averages, and of the 1999 graduating seniors, all Suquamish students ranked in the bottom third of their class. Cindy Purser, Secretary of the Inter-Tribal Parent Education Committee, Suquamish Tribal Elementary Education Liaison and mother of five Tribal members, writes in her letter of support that *RezNet* “could turn around the declining assignment completion scores beginning in the 8th grade,” in which they saw a 25% decrease between 6th and 8th grades in Suquamish students (Attachment II).

RezNet is the third step in an on-going technology project that has included the Computer Loan Program, which places refurbished systems into Tribal member homes, and the Computer Learning Center, which provides the Suquamish community access to 20 state-of-the-art systems, on which they can receive college degrees and computer certifications. Each aspect grew out of evaluation of the previous project. It began with Tribal families needing computers in their homes for education, work, or play. We have distributed over 50 computers and continue to do so, but participants were faced with a number of obstacles that could not be easily rectified. The reason we were distributing these computers was to provide access where there had been none previously, thus once the computers were in the homes families did not know how to utilize them. Access to the Internet was just as problematic because many participants lacked phone service or the funds to pay for an Internet provider and the area cable companies do not serve one Tribal Housing Development. Unfortunately, the Suquamish Tribe Information Systems staff lacked the numbers to be able to handle the on-going maintenance of this project.

We determined that instructional services must be available in order for the program to succeed, and the Suquamish Computer Learning Center (SCLC) project was born. We applied for a number of different grants, including the 1999 TIIAP, and fund- raised and were able to develop a wonderful program. The Suquamish Tribe Higher Education

Committee purchased a block of computer education units, allowing Tribal members to walk in and immediately begin computer classes. Because they are available over the Internet and can be completed at the user's leisure, they are quite popular and another large block of units is being purchased. To expand on the education aspect, a program has started that will allow thirteen Native Americans, primarily composed of Tribal members, be involved in an on-the-job training program. These students will spend half of their day in a classroom setting and the rest assisting in the SCLC (Attachment I). While we consider this an enormous accomplishment, it has been called to our attention that elementary-aged youth are not as able to utilize this facility.

This information compelled us to analyze the daily sign-in logs and user information sheets. It was discovered that since its opening the SCLC has seen its daily users double, but when you pull out the number of children under 12, there has been no incline, in fact the usage is hardly even noticeable (Attachment XI). The idea for RezNet came from a mother, who was concerned for the children whose parents worked late or did not have transportation. We considered utilizing any available vehicles as shuttles but parents were very concerned with their young children being at the SCLC without close supervision. Following meetings with community members and school officials, it was decided that this project would be the most useful approach to target the scholastic and access challenges faced by our young Tribal members.

Partnerships are being finalized with the North Kitsap School District (Attachment VII & XII), in particular Suquamish Elementary, which is located on the Port Madison Indian Reservation but is *not* a Tribal school; the Marion Forsman-Boushie Early Learning Center, which includes Early Head Start (0-2), Head Start (3-5), childcare and After-school programs (Attachment XVII); and the Inter-Tribal Parents Education Committee, who are comprised of parents of Native children in NKSD. The Native American Liaison Program through NKSD will be the primary contact at the schools and ensure that information is being forwarded to the RezNet staff regarding current homework projects and upcoming events. This will allow the staff to remind children and their parents of what projects are coming due. Further, NKSD will assist with developing and reviewing the curriculum and community intranet website, "Virtual Longhouse". The Early Learning Center clientele is largely Native and works to have a Suquamish cultural component to its teachings, including revitalizing our Lushootseed language. There is a computer program that has been developed but cannot be operated at the ELC due to an incompatible and out-dated computer, shared between all of the youth programs. The ELC will be able to use the *RezNet* bus during the day, while the older children are at school. The Inter-Tribal Parents Education Committee meets regularly to strategize ways to foster scholastic achievement in Native youth. They are now developing packets, which can be distributed to Native children over the summers to promote on-going, independent learning.

We believe this project will encourage elementary children to be excited about learning, consequently increasing their performance in school. We expect to see an academic incline, of at least one letter grade, in at least 50% of the participants within six months of the project's inception. Further, we will be recruiting neighborhood volunteers, who will

meet the RezNet bus when it visits that neighborhood. These volunteers will talk with their neighbors to increase knowledge of the services provided and encourage parents to take an active role in the academic process, by bringing their children to the SCLC on days when the bus is not available.

To further encourage this participation, RezNet staff will be developing the “Virtual Longhouse”, which will be a community intranet. This idea has been a dream of the Suquamish Tribe’s Manager of Information Systems for quite sometime, but the idea was clenched for this project when we reviewed the evaluation of TIIAP funded Trans-Border Information Technology Collaborative project, which stated that “Interest was also expressed in being able to keep local network traffic in the region to reduce transmission time. Thus, “they are looking into developing an area intranet.” This is important to our community because there are many people who are not computer literate and may be embarrassed to ask for help. This “Virtual Longhouse” will be designed specifically for those people who are not computer literate, but would like to learn. We hope to take the TB-ITC project to the next level by producing the area intranet. We have been told that there are these Netmobiles all over but we have yet to find one that is working with children in such a way. We did try to contact a few projects but were unable to reach anyone and the email we sent to the *Net on Wheels* site we located through a search engine was returned.

Another innovative aspect of our project is the use of both fixed and wireless network technologies (Attachments VIII & XV). The heart of this project is located in RezNet bus but what makes that heart beat is the tower, which will provide the bus with its ability to transmit the data. It will work through the RezNet’s access to the internal website. The signal travels to the tower antenna and is transmitted to the central site (the Suquamish Computer Learning Center), where it is converted back to Ethernet. At the central site the signal is handed off via router to a T-1 line, which provides access to the Internet through the Internet Service Provider. The returned website information is sent over the T-1, to the central site, back to the remote site. The radios convert the 100baseT signal to 2.4 GHz signals and back again, providing a transparent Ethernet connection. BreezeCom will provide the components for the wireless network (Attachment XXI).

The Communications tower, which will allow network access to and from the MCLC, is 300 feet tall, with a ground level elevation of between 250 – 300 feet. A T-1 feed (4 pairs) will be the input-output pipe. The Uni-13 bi-directional antennas will communicate with the antenna on top on the MCLC. The tower is self-supporting. An environmental enclosure at the base will house the rest of the required equipment. In the enclosure will be at least the following:

- UPS
- 8 port 10/100 hub
- T-1
- Router

Power will be run to the ODB on the tower as well as Ethernet cable to each unit, or a small 12-port hub in another tower-mounted ODB into which each of the 5 units feed

Ethernet. That would allow for just one Ethernet feed and one power feed to the hut from the top of the tower. The MCLC itself will have 10 computer workstations, a hub, a router and a Boxlight projector on board. Files and curriculum will be served from a central server at the SCLC and via the Internet through the central server maintained by Epic Learning. Additionally, the Suquamish Tribe will provide CBT (Computer Based Training) CD-ROMs focusing on K-6 education. This curriculum will be evaluated (before deployment) by representatives from the North Kitsap School District for consistency with the District's educational objectives.

RezNet: The Suquamish Electronic Nation Mobile Project will provide our Suquamish Youth with the opportunities they are being kept from due to lack of finances, transportation and access. This project will allow them to compete in our ever-changing technological society. We have developed partnerships with the key stakeholders and now need the financial support to implement the program.

“Both school performance, whether measured by reading achievement or teacher-rated reading performance, and retention in grade related to delinquency...the relationship between reading performance and delinquency appears even for first graders.

Likewise, retention in grades associates with delinquency even for first graders.”

Urban Delinquency and Substance Abuse: Initial Finding Report, 1994

