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HSU Internet project wins education award

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The state agency that oversees Internet resources for higher education has awarded a Humboldt State University broadband program for its achievements, according to a press release.

Redwood Coast Connect, a pilot project partnered by HSU to spur high speed broadband service in the four-county region, will be honored for “Innovations in Networking for Gigabit Broadband Applications” at a conference in Long Beach on March 10 hosted by the Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California, or CENIC.

It operates a high-bandwidth, high-capacity Internet system tailored to education's unique requirements.

”Being recognized by CENIC is a high honor because it has been advocating along with us for fiber route diversity,” said Tina Nerat of Neratech, a Humboldt company that specializes in business solutions through information technology. “CENIC has kept the North Coast on the state's broadband radar for the past seven years and it continues to keep us on the state's radar with this award. It recognizes how important Redwood Coast Connect findings are to rural California.”

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The findings measure demand for broadband service across Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino and Trinity counties. The four are the first counties in the state to track and demonstrate substantial and growing demand for rural broadband services in un-served and underserved communities. Redwood Coast Connect is documenting the strong need for Internet infrastructure throughout the region in a bid to attract investment from service providers.

HSU, in partnership with Redwood Coast Rural Action, secured $500,000 from the California Emerging Technology Fund and a consortium of regional financiers to underwrite Redwood Coast Connect.

”The university's role in the analysis of regional broadband needs is part of a broad and continuing effort to involve students in key rural issues as they pursue their higher education,” President Rollin Richmond said.

Proponents say full-scale Internet services would help to shore up the region's sagging economy, fueling economic development, providing better health care and generating jobs and growth for agriculture, ranching, American Indian tribes, green initiatives, educators and niche companies eager to pursue state, national and export markets.

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