

<https://wildrivers.lostcoastoutpost.com/2021/apr/12/nonprofit-donates-another-500-computers-del-norte/>

JESSICA CEJNAR / MONDAY, APRIL 12 @ 4:34 P.M.

# Nonprofit Donates Another 500 Computers to Del Norte Students

---

## Previously:

- Nonprofit Aiming to Breach the Digital Divide Gives Chromebooks to Crescent Elk 6th-Graders

###

Though the year is entering its final few weeks, 500 Del Norte County students will receive computers officials hope will last them through graduation.

After it donated 200 Chromebooks to Crescent Elk Middle School students earlier this year, the California Emerging Technology Fund will focus on their seventh- and eighth-grade classmates as well as Del Norte High School's "neediest freshman students," Del Norte Unified School District instructional coach Lisa Howard told the Wild Rivers Outpost on Monday.

These devices will belong to the students themselves, Howard said. But DNUSD will provide the licensing for each Chromebook, enabling students to access the programs they need for school, she said.

"The outlay for the district is \$16,000, so it's a true commitment both ways if the child plans to keep good care of their device," Howard said, adding that licensing costs are about \$32 per unit. "Their device comes with a neoprene cover. It's a nice way to keep it and travel back and forth to school."

The district will also help the students with maintaining their device, said DNUSD spokesman Michael Hawkins.

Students already took a survey to gauge their need for a device — Howard said some had already received a computer through another entity, such as the Yurok Tribe or the Rotary Club. She said she hopes the computers will be delivered to the district office this week where they'll be unboxed and licensed. The district could begin distributing them as soon as April 23.

"We're hoping to do seventh-grade one Friday, eighth-grade the next Friday and ninth-grade the following Friday," she said. "Families will receive a letter home that says, 'Congratulations, your child will receive their own device to own forever,' and when they can pick it up."

While their students are receiving their device, parents will also be able to take a technology class courtesy of Crescent Elk technology teacher Lucas O’Laughlin.

The California Emerging Technology Fund is a non-profit corporation created when the California Public Utilities Commission approved the mergers of SBC-AT&T and Verizon-MCI in 2009. As a result, the companies were required to contribute \$60 million over five years to give underserved communities better access to broadband.

Earlier this year, Del Norte County was one of 17 to receive CETF dollars to support technology for middle and high schoolers within Frontier Communications’ coverage area, which includes Crescent City and Klamath, according to Howard.

CETF is donating a total of 4,000 computers to students within Frontier Communications’ coverage area — 500 are going to DNUSD students, Howard said. The district plans to put those devices in the hands of students who don’t already have computers, she said.

The 200 CTEF devices DNUSD received earlier this year went primarily to sixth-graders, Howard said. However, they also were distributed to English-language learners, special needs students and those who are homeless, she said.

“We went with our highest needs students first,” Howard said. “We’re going to make sure every student at Crescent Elk will own their own device.”

In addition to living within a Frontier Communications coverage area, the students receiving computers had to qualify to receive a free and reduced lunch either because their families rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, earn less than \$40,000 a year or qualify for MediCal, Howard told the Outpost in September.

On Monday, Howard said the digital divide CETF seeks to breach exists for many local families. DNUSD seeks to point them toward hot spots either through their local schools or other locations.

“Hopefully, that number of families we aren’t connecting with is decreasing and is getting ever smaller to the point where we can always meet the need,” she said. “The end goal is we are increasing equity and access for all students and, hopefully, meeting those needs where they are at.”