

**USDA Rural Development
Telecommunications Program
Success Story: Community Connect Program
Port Gamble S’Klallam Indian Reservation, Washington**

Need:

Located on the Kitsap Peninsula in Washington State, the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe has faced several barriers in obtaining broadband access. The physical isolation of the reservation has in itself hindered access. Although remote, the reservation is home to creeks and forests that are essential for maintaining their traditional tribal lifestyle. In addition, financial strain has kept the small community of nearly 700 disconnected from modern internet services. The per capita income on the reservation is \$10,111, which is less than half of the national average. Therefore, remoteness and poverty have impeded this community from advancing into modern technology and global connectivity.

How Rural Development Helped:

In 2002, The Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe received a Community Connect Broadband grant in the amount of \$498,503. The grant funded the cost of providing broadband service to the Port Gamble S’Klallam Indian Reservation, including a community center with access to ten computers for the public.

Result:

Presently, over 1,000 computers have been connected to broadband service including approximately 100 tribal families. Port Gamble S’Klallam authority entities, facilities, and organizations have access to broadband, including: the Little Boston Library; the Education Center; the S’Klallam Housing Authority; the Port Gamble Development Authority; the Health Services Center; the Northwest Indian College/Evergreen State College higher education programs on the reservation; and the Community Center, which is the primary government headquarters.

By creating the broadband network, the tribe has been able to expand educational and business opportunities for its members. Students are now able to take online courses from the University of Washington without having to leave the reservation. Business owners and entrepreneurs are also now able to take advantage of internet marketing and business. Broadband provides the reservation with a vital link to the rest of the world when disaster strikes. Even if the reservation and surrounding areas lose power, the Internet still functions and laptop users are able to receive vital emergency updates as well as keep in contact with emergency crews and loved ones.