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Local News

FOUNDATION SEEKS GRANTS FOR COMPUTERS

The Beaumont Foundation of America, headquartered in Jefferson County, Texas, today kicked off its effort to provide free computer technology to underserved communities in Mississippi.

The \$350 million foundation will begin accepting grant applications for its first grant cycle immediately.

Initiation of the program was announced last Monday by Gov. Ronnie Musgrove. This effort will follow up the state's recently completed Computer Blitz that placed a state-of-the-art, Internet-accessible computer in every Mississippi classroom.

The foundation's core purpose is to grant state-of-the-art, Internet-enabled, wireless computer hardware to Americans who do not have access to the educational benefits of the Internet, and to collaborate with existing successful organizations to provide the technical support to utilize it. Grants from the foundation will be available across America throughout the next four years.

The Beaumont Foundation of America was funded as part of the settlement of an historic \$2.1 billion nationwide class action case. Three Beaumont, Texas lawyers, Wayne A. Reaud, Gilbert I. Low and Hubert Oxford, conceived of an ingenious approach to use large class action litigation for public good.

Under this model, unclaimed portions of the class action recovery are placed in a foundation which is dedicated to addressing unmet social needs. Mark Sanders, spokesman with the foundation, says the case involved floppy disk control with Toshiba Electronics Corporation. After settlement of the case there was approximately \$350 million available.

He says the judge and lawyers in the case decided to place the money in a foundation to be distributed over a five-year period. The ultimate distribution will cover all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The foundation believes that the unique circumstances under which it was created can serve as a model for similar class action settlements and give rise to a new form of American philanthropy.

"I'd like to see to it that there is not a child in this country who is denied access to a computer, nor is there a child in this country who has access to a computer but does not have a teacher who can teach him how to use it," said Frank Newton, the foundation's executive director.

The Foundation is dedicated to the principle of digital inclusion. That is, to help make today's technology and all the educational advantages that accrue from it accessible to everyone, everywhere, anytime. From the most remote rural areas to the most densely populated sectors of our inner cities, the foundation strives to provide the benefits of unlimited access to information.

The Beaumont Foundation of America is granting computer hardware to qualifying non-profits, faith-based and community organizations, libraries, schools and individuals in need. Grant applications are being accepted from January 1, 2003 through March 31, 2003. For more information about eligibility and future grant application opportunities, contact the Beaumont Foundation of America at www.bmtfoundation.com or call at 1-866-505-COMP.