Grant provides high-tech learning for rural Utah schools

SALT LAKE CITY – A $13.4 million grant to the Utah Education Network will allow rural schools in Utah to join universities and high schools classrooms anywhere in the state through video conferencing.

Through Interactive Video Conferencing, students in the southern-most parts of Utah can get in touch with classrooms in the northern-most parts. There is no limit to the distance that these bandwidth networks can reach.

Monday, Wendover High School's automotive teacher, Craig Guinesson, demonstrated how to access the treat to the class, and to students four and half hours away at Navajo Mountain High School. Students in rural parts of Utah now have the opportunity to learn more and ask questions through video.

Navajo Mountain Principal, Jennie Smith said thanks to the technology, her students can receive an associate degree by the time they graduate.

"Thank you UEN for everything that you have done to bring the course and other courses, including chemistry, to our school. Thank you," she said.

Out of 1,600 applicants for the federal grant, only 17 have been awarded so far. The UEN is the only one in the western United States to get this grant.

The organization predicts that Interactive Video Conferencing will benefit more people than just school children.

By the numbers...

Utah Education Network 
- $13.4 million federal grant 
- 120,000 estimated citizens to benefit 
- 40 estimated jobs created 
- 40 participating schools, institutions, libraries, Head Start centers 
- 250 classes/day 

Utah Education Network

We also estimate that this grant will provide, or prepare, about 450 jobs," said UEN executive director Michael Peterson.

Utah Congressmen Jim Matheson announced the grant Monday as one of the largest federal telecommunications grants to date.

He said grant will also allow UEN to expand service to dozens of elementary schools, public libraries, charter schools and Head Start centers across the state.

Story compiled with contributions from John Daly and The Associated Press.