How The West Will Win

The Urgent Call for Community Internet Activists

A joint effort of the
Cooperative Extension Services at
Colorado State University
New Mexico State University
Oregon State University
and
Utah State University

Helping Rural Westerners Learn the ABCs of Achieving Prosperity in the Internet Age

66 We get quick professional response in a very timely manner. Very helpful to our businesses."

**- Cheryl Maynard
Marina Supervisor
Port of Olympia, WA**

66 A lot of people are fascinated that we have the heritage on one hand and we have the technology on the other hand. It's a great marriage as far as the two are concerned. People are looking for old crafts. Heritage tourism is now the #1 tourism venue in the United States. People come here to visit us because they've picked it up on the Web. I think it's great – just fabulous."

**- Ron Bushman
Lizzie's and Charlie's Working Loom Factory
Marysvale, Utah**

66 If we didn't have high-speed services currently, we would probably be half the size that we are. We have increased our business over 50 percent in the last two years mainly based on the services that we're able to provide because of high-speed data services."

**- Matt Laws
Affiliated Credit Services
Fort Morgan, CO**

66 The speed at which we can pick up information is so much greater now. It's invaluable. I've saved probably hours each week."

**- Rich Girard
Washington County Operations
Hillsborough, Oregon**

66 And marketing is the key word here. We need to reach out to the many markets through the world that are looking for us, that are looking for our art work, looking for something unique and different, wanting a part of world history, and we are a part of world history."

**- Esadadernos Sal Da Na,
Native American Artist,
Gallup, NM**

Be a Winner

How can your business and community join the "winners" -- those who opt to join the Internet revolution and use cutting edge electronic technologies to their advantage?

A recent *INC. Magazine* **article indicated** that broadband is available in only 5% of towns with populations fewer than 10,000. These communities contain the people and businesses that have been forgotten in the push to integrate all into the new electronic economy.

Federal policies effectively redline small and mid-sized communities and businesses in the rural West. The crisis is further compounded by the fact that many community and business leaders in these communities do not even realize how quickly and, potentially, irrevocably they are being pushed further down on the economic scale by failing to insist that current digital divide-creating public policies are overturned.

Involvement in Internet programs is not optional for a prosperous rural community. An article in the Harvard School of Business says "winner institutions" must provide quality content to their clients through seamless, high-quality Internet delivery, while "losers" postpone action. The need for broadband (Internet access) must be recognized and a policy of activism followed to counter the lack of infrastructure and information.

Local Internet activists must be found or developed to drive the process of joining the Internet Economy. Becoming an Internet Activist means understanding what the Internet connection can do for you, making a plan for your community's future, working with Internet Service Providers to make telecommunications part of that future, and making sure everybody in the community buys into and works toward achieving your goals.

Here is what fellow community leaders are saying about the importance of Internet Activism:

66 I think our role as community leaders is basically to keep people informed of what kinds of possibilities they're going to have. Good solid cost factors associated with the technology that's coming to us and those types of issues. I think it's important that we have an open mind and we look towards the

future. And as I told someone, (he said) you keep bring all these ideas to us and all the different things and there's parts of it that we're not going to be able to afford, Mike. And I said, you know, not being able to afford a particular piece of technology is acceptable to me. Not knowing about it isn't. And I think our role as community leaders is to make sure that we're aware of what's available and our community is aware of what's available."

*- Mike Harms
County Commissioner
Morgan County, CO*

" I just think that telecommunications, and especially when we talk about affordable high-speed broadband access, is just tremendously important to rural areas, not only of Colorado, but all parts of the country, but especially to the mountain west where we do have landscape issues and we don't have, as they say, a lot of people between light posts. So it's a very important part of it. More and more government information is on the Internet. More and more agriculture is looking to the Internet for research and information. The business community - the competition is not only the guy down the street, but it could be the guy in Africa who has set up a Web site and is selling products. So we're finding that we feel that this is one of the major issues facing our area in the next five to ten years."

- Cathy Shull
Exec. Director
Fort Morgan Area Chamber of Commerce
Colorado

" It's tough. Change is frightening to many people. And the fears that people have with regard to threats to their present lifestyle are certainly totally legitimate. So it becomes our responsibility to attempt to inform about the options that are likely to become available ... there are those who would prefer to see no change. And, I think, some who don't acknowledge the fact that regardless of what we desire, there will be change. And we see it as up to us to inform people in such a way that we can guide the change in such a way that it is going to be positive rather than negative."

- Harry Kroyer,
Chairman,
Magdalena Area Community Development Corporation,
Magdalena, NM

Key Questions

Key questions for businesses to ask before moving or starting up in a new location.

1. Can I connect to a fiber-optic network?

2. How much will it cost to plug in?

3. How long will it take?

4. Who's competing to provide me with service?

5. What are the rates?

6. Is the network connected to major cities nearby?

7. How many other companies are there?

8. Do they use the network?

9. Can residents connect to the high-speed network and telecommute?

10. Are wireless services available?

Source: "On the Wired Front" by Jill Hecht Maxwell, *Inc. Magazine*, September 15, 2000.

Activities:

After watching the video, organize one or more of the activities below.

• Convene a panel of community Internet users, such as representatives of the local Cooperative Extension office, the Small Business Development Center, the local planning department, an Internet Service Provider, a business that uses some aspect of the Internet, or a local hospital. Ask panel members to speak briefly about their organization's use of the Internet, then encourage an exchange among panelists and audience members.

• Have a brainstorming session to identify a committee of local individuals who have a vested interest in improving local community or business involvement in Internet use. Identify what role each member might play as an Internet Activist.

• Conduct a mini planning session to encourage an increase in Internet use by members of the business community and/or local government. Here are some questions that you should try to answer:*

1. Who are you trying to serve?

2. What defines the population?

3. What types of services does the population want?

4. What types of services are already being provided?

5. What type of service are you trying to provide?

6. Is anyone else currently providing or developing this service?

7. What is your overall objective?

8. Who will need to cooperate to get it done?

9. Why is this a good idea?

10. What information is already available and what is needed?

11. Who are the key players? Involve them!

Activities, cont.

• If Internet access is available, have a local service provider show you how to set up a customized portal into the Internet. A Web portal is a "cyber door" to the Internet. These are the home pages that come up when you access the Internet. They provide a familiar starting point each time you start your Web activities. Portals usually include information, news and trivia of personal relevance, e-mail, bulletin boards and other tools that can assist you in your information searches on the Web.

Most service providers — whether global or local — allow you to customize the portals so they provide information that is relevant and useful to you, including stock quotes, market prices, links to newsletters or industry-specific news.

For example, by selecting My Netscape at Netscape.com, you can make Netscape your home page. Before proceeding, you'll be asked to register by filling out a questionnaire. To build your own page, click on Preferences. You can decide what information you want displayed, and where you want it placed on the page. You can select from categories such as the weather, stock quotes, a calendar, bookmarks of your favorite Web sites and the latest headlines.

Suggested Internet Sites

SITES THAT ADDRESS
THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING CONNECTED

http://www.digitaldividenetwork.org/
Digital Divide Network: sponsored by the Benton Foundation, is dedicated to information about the Digital Divide and its elimination.

http://www.digitaldivide.gov/#newsletter
Closing the Digital Divide is a clearinghouse of information about the federal administration's programs to close the digital divide.

http://www.ntia.doc.gov/
NTIA is the Web site for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, US Department of Commerce.

http://www.ngi.org/
Center for Next Generation Internet looks at upcoming developments in the Internet and Internet applications.

Suggested Internet Sites

E-BUSINESS & E-COMMERCE SITES

http://ecommerce.internet.com/
Internet.com's Electronic Commerce Guide is a source of information about electronic commerce.

http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/library/reference/guides/ecommerce/
Catherwood Library: Guide to E-Commerce is designed as a beginner's introduction to e-commerce, providing links to a broad array of resources.

http://www.ebusinessforum.com/
e-Businessforum is sponsored by the same group that publishes the *Economist* newspaper, seeks to provide insight into and analysis of successful strategies for the global digital economy.

http://www.becrc.org/index.html
E-commerce Resource Center, ECRC Bremerton, WA, provides a wide range of e-commerce and Internet resources at beginner and expert levels.

http://www.tpeditor.com/tponline.htm
The online version of the Telecommunications Policy Journal; covers policy and knowledge, infrastructure development, management and regulation.

http://ext.msstate.edu/srdc/E-Team/index.html
E-Team is a national, land-grant university design team organized to promote education on electronic business issues.

E-GOVERNMENT SITES

http://www.ntia.doc.gov/
National Telecomm and Info Admin (NTIA) is the Web site for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, US Department of Commerce.

http://www.digitalgovt.com/
Center for Digital Government provides government and industry leaders with services to help them with issues related to electronic government.

http://www.ieg.ibm.com/
IBM-Electronic Communities-Government is the Web home of the Institute for Electronic Government, founded by IBM in 1995.

http://www.fcw.com/
Civic.com is a source of information about the use of information technology in government.

OTHER

www.learnethenet.com
Multilingual guide and tutorial explores the basics of the Web, such as e-mail or newsgroups, and advanced topics like conferencing.

About the Teleliteracy Program

How The West Will Win was developed by the Western Rural Development Center. It is adapted from Embracing the e-Revolution: A Call for Rural Internet Activists, part of New Mexico State University's Teleliteracy Assistance for Businesses and Communities (T-ABCs) program. The T-ABCs program includes:

E-asy Does It! - Welcome to the Electronic Age - This brief program highlights the many ways that rural New Mexicans can benefit by traveling the Information Highway. Designed for general audiences, this educational package includes a short video (approx. 10 min.) in which New Mexicans from Gallup to Jal tell about their Internet ventures and how this amazing technology is enriching their lives.

Embracing the e-Revolution: A Call for Rural Internet Activists (How The West Will Win replaces this for regional uses) - This short program will convince rural leaders that they must act together and act immediately to bring the benefits of the "e-revolution" to their businesses and communities. The centerpiece of this educational package is a video that highlights several of New Mexico's rural businesses and small governments that embraced the e-revolution, some of the battles they waged and won, and why it is so important to be involved.

The ABCs of e-Business - In this eight-lesson workshop series, business owners and entrepreneurs will learn how the Internet and related technologies can add speed, efficiency, and profitability to every step of the traditional business process – from product and market research through sales and customer support. A variety of New Mexico businesses are featured.

The ABCs of e-Government - This five-lesson workshop series shows community leaders the many ways that electronic telecommunication technologies can increase interactions between local governments and citizens, make local government more efficient and effective, and improve the climate for community economic development. This educational package highlights the efforts of innovative leaders in several rural New Mexico communities.

T-ABCs curricula were developed by faculty members from NMSU's Cooperative Extension Service, College of Business Administration and Economics, and College of Arts and Sciences. Extension's media and Internet production unit developed multimedia tools for the programs.

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