



Producing on-line results: collaborating for rural development

by Tim Walter, Aspen Institute

Tim Walter manages the HandsNet Rural Issues Forum as part of the Rural Telecommunications Initiative at the Aspen Institute. As part of the work, he has catalogued a collection of sites, resources and conferences used by rural development practitioners on the Internet and other computer networks.

Heralded as a driving force that will change the future of world communication, the information highway is flashy and exotic. But how can rural development practitioners get beyond the flash and hype to really use networking technology to solve problems? The payoff for rural developers using networks like the Internet can be found by looking back to the early years of the network.

In the beginning, the Internet was a more cooperative venture than it is today. The collaborative interactions that marked the early success of the Internet are still essential to its effective use. Some of the same founding cooperative spirit carries over, although it is sometimes hidden in the exploding commercialization of the Internet.

The key point remains not **what** you can find on-line, but **whom** you can find. Human-to-human interaction is the most significant legacy of the information highway.

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Rural development practitioners can benefit from the commercial forces that are rapidly spreading technology. The same networking tools that kids from Kentucky use to flirt with kids from Japan, tools that allow you to follow the hourly movements of a famous movie star, and tools that let you hear Clinton's cat go "meow" can also be used to increase your productivity. "Productivity" isn't glamorous, so it's not often mentioned in mass media advertisements. But the value is there.

Collaborative productivity on-line

There are two ways to think about being more productive by going on-line. First, you can search for information, like in a library. Second, you can get in touch with a live person who may be able to help you, as if you had gone to a conference or convention. Today there are over 20,000 e-mail lists and "virtual" conferences on the Internet and thousands more on private bulletin boards.

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Rural development practitioners can, and in my view—should—use these networks to keep our field of practice at the cutting edge. If we are just a little more productive, at the end of the year we may see one more family that has avoided the upheaval of layoffs, more kids may spend their next year in a renovated house, and a mother may find the medical care she needs. Our productivity is important.

Although productivity isn't a focus of consumer advertising, it is a main concern in the corporate marketplace. So, in what way is technology being used to boost

corporate productivity?

One of the most prominent ways is through networking software called "groupware".

Groupware doesn't just link databases; it strives to link people and to facilitate workers' communication.

One typical user is Price Waterhouse, a large accounting and consulting firm. Their offices serve local clients in cities all over the country. Taken as a whole, the company has a huge collection of expertise, but it is limited by its ability to deploy the right experts to the right local problem.

So the firm set up a computer system through which individual workers, who are closest to the customers' problems, can request help from fellow workers all around the United States.

The same types of collaborative networks can help rural development organizations become more productive. We are primarily a fragmented collection of small, local, entrepreneurial organizations who, as a body, have a great collection of experience.

How might nonprofits and community developers use the Price Waterhouse model to share their collective experience? Take the example of six small loan funds who choose to work together to analyze

loans. Each loan fund has only one or two loan officers to analyze business plans and make recommendations on applications.

Picture this scenario: an entrepreneur comes looking for funds to start up a dry cleaning business. As it turns out, the loan officer has never seen a dry cleaning business plan before. So the officer sends out an e-mail message to her five collaborators asking for help. Of the five, lo and behold, two have experience with dry cleaning and can offer advice on the spot.

After several months, the loan funds decide to get fancy. They hire a moderator to organize all their e-mail exchanges into an on-line library. The moderator adds an element of formality and structure, but at a price.

Making it work for you

Making telecommunications work for your organization doesn't have to be pricey. The technology for exchanging e-mail and reading on-line libraries (also called bulletin boards) is fairly mundane and widely available. You won't even spend a lot on long-distance charges.

The key to making groupware systems work is establishing habits for effective collaboration. Users must be committed to regularly checking their e-mail and responding as if they were in a face-to-face meeting. A moderator adds costs with no guarantee that folks will collaborate.

HandsNet has been a leading groupware proponent in the nonprofit community. HandsNet is a collection of about 5,000 nonprofit organizations that pay dues to share an on-line network.

HandsNet originally guessed that a spirit of community among its members was critical to forming collaborations. But lacking real projects to collaborate on, members began demanding less "moderating" and better organized news and data. Foundations have responded by providing more funding to improve the information content on-line.

"If we are just a little more productive, at the end of the year we may see one more family that has avoided the upheaval of layoffs, more kids may spend their next year in a renovated house, and a mother may find the medical care she needs."

Today, plenty of those skeptical about the costs of being on-line stick with HandsNet. Many believe in the future potential of collaborating with like-minded organizations on-line.

Local efforts critical

Looking ahead, one problem is the lack of local information and people available on the big networks. After all, while networking nationally (or globally) has some wonderful benefits, at some point the local folks have to implement solutions.

There are grassroots movements afoot all over the United States to build community computer networks, also called "civic networks." Conceivably, these will help you locate neighbors who have concerns similar to yours.

To bring access to your town, you can organize a civic network, essentially an Internet Co-op. These community networks operate using a lot of volunteers. Or, ask the state to hook up the local school and library and sell time in the evening to the general public. A school with a fast enough connection could even sell Internet time during the day to local businesses.

There are probably 12,000 kids around the country who have set up local "bulletin board" networks in their parents' basements or barns. In total, there are about 100,000 of these basement systems running. You've probably got a willing high school computer whiz somewhere in your town. Don't forget to pay them something—it's hard work and is not a way to get rich.

For more information

This article has not focused on what you can find on-line. Go to your local library, look at the magazine rack—much of this is available on-line. Sometimes you have to pay for it; other times it is free.

The good news is that costs are coming down. We are able to buy only as much as we need. And slowly, information that often doesn't get reported by the mainstream press can be found on-line. But if you're looking for solutions to problems, your best bet is still to contact another person.

I have compiled a list of listserves (see related article on pages 12-13) and World Wide Web sites relating to rural development. If you send me an e-mail message requesting my list, I will gladly send it.

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On-line reflections. . .

what to expect

•**Expect success:** I love the stories like the recent success by some rural parents of a Downs Syndrome child. The parents didn't have friends locally who could relate to their experiences, good and bad. So they formed an e-mail group which has been joined by 1000 other parents to share stories and information.

•**Expect to spend time or money:** The information and communication on-line is messy and disorganized. If you want it perfectly organized and presented in a pretty wrapping, be prepared to pay handsomely. If you're willing to scramble for what you need, the payoff can be quite rewarding.

•**Expect opportunity:** Using communications technology, rural folks can take a business opportunity (or a question, or an opinion) to a large scale much more rapidly than before. For instance, a collection of micro-entrepreneurs from rural areas have formed a World Wide Web site to advertise their products.

•**Expect to work faster:** We are expected to respond to problems and perform services more and more rapidly. Stores that provide slow or irritating service are being replaced by those that make shopping pleasurable. The development community and the public sector, need to make the same efforts.

—Tim Walter

Ritchie County, WV: GROWing and GROWing

by J. Patrick Hall



Brandon Burns and Chase Marshall of the Happy Days 4-H Club, and Shorty Bumgardner and Jan White of the GROW team combine efforts to clean up the football stadium after a recent game.

The folks in Ritchie County, West Virginia, are busily working on their plans to conduct a beautification project at the newly constructed Ritchie County Middle/High School complex. The group is known as GROW (Generating Ritchie County Opportunities from Within).

In consultation with the schools' administrators, the team has targeted two project phases.

Phase one is the beautification of the front oval which welcomes students, family and visitors to the school. Phase two is beautification of the complex's center courtyard, which is visible to the folks inside the school.

A local professional landscaping business has prepared architectural drawings to be used as a base from which to work. As part of the project, ten trees will be planted to match the number of wins in the

Rebel football team's perfect season. Phase one of the process is expected to be completed within the designated six-month timeframe.

The Ritchie County Board of Education has given its endorsement. The entire community seems to be excited about the project. Students have been contacted to participate in the initial planning. The schools' partners-in-education have agreed to commit financial and other resources. GROW is in the process of exploring other fundraising strategies, but already has a great base from which to work.

GROW and the Harrisville Happy Days 4-H Club recently combined forces to remove trash and other debris from the football stadium following a game. The 4-H Club members donated \$100.00 of their earnings toward the beautification project. GROW is pleased to accept this generous donation and is particularly proud of the youth leadership and pride in community demonstrated by our county's children and their families.

Clay County, KY: CEEDs for the future

by James Nolan

CLAY
ENVIRONMENTAL
ENHANCEMENT &
DEVELOPMENT

Community-wide support has been tremendous for Clay County's Clay Environmental Enhancement and Development (CEED) Project. The CEED team plans to beautify the main highway approach to Manchester and construct a riverside park and walking trail which will be visible upon entering the town.

The idea has gained tremendous support from every facet of our community. New sources of cash support are being uncovered at nearly every meeting of our committee. Donations of in-kind services support have also mushroomed.

This in-kind support should greatly reduce our out-of-pocket expense and may enable us to expand the project sooner than expected.

We are currently ahead of schedule and have experienced few difficulties. In our November meeting, we submitted our request for funding to Brushy Fork Institute and reviewed our progress to date. Seedling Grant funding should move us nearer to our goal of \$35,000—the estimated cost of our total project.

Scott Madden, our group's co-facilitator, says he has seen few projects which have garnered such area-wide support. The CEED team sees no reason the project should not be completed by the six-month deadline.

Morgan County, KY: Help Us Help You

by Bonnie McKenzie

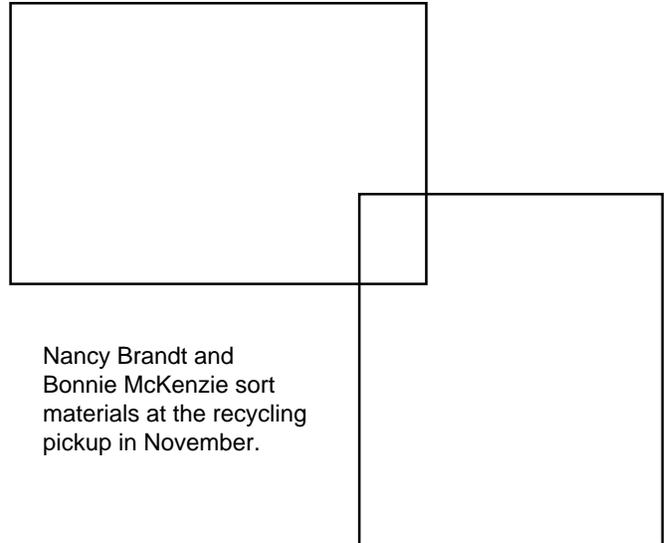
Morgan County's Help Us Help You team left Brushy Fork with heads full of ideas for our recycling project. Our first meeting's main topic was getting the community involved in the first recycling pickup, which was held on November 3 and 4.

Advertising flyers were put in everyone's telephone bills, compliments of Mountain Rural Telephone Co-op. HUHYP members made presentations at local civic groups and put ads in the newspaper and on the radio.

The recycling collection was a huge success. We collected approximately 1500 pounds of newspaper, a wagon full of cardboard, another wagon full of plastics and half a bin of aluminum cans.

As a fundraiser, a charity auction was held on November 18 at the West Liberty Community Center. The auction drew several people and brought proceeds of over \$300.00.

The West Liberty Uptown Merchants Association Christmas Festival was held December 1. HUHYP members made recycle ornaments for a Christmas tree that was on a float we constructed for



Nancy Brandt and Bonnie McKenzie sort materials at the recycling pickup in November.

the annual Christmas parade. The theme of the festival was "Joy to the World". The HUHYP float theme was "Keep Joy in the World—RECYCLE." Our float won a \$100.00 prize.

Later that day the HUHYP team held a bake sale at the West Liberty Kiwanis Club Christmas auction. We also sold the handmade recycle ornaments that were used in the parade.

HUHYP has its second pickup date scheduled for December 8 and 9. We hope that the pickup will be even bigger due to the community being more aware of the recycling project.

Fayette County, WV: A partnership for community

by Beverly Walkup



The Four Rivers Community Partnership of Fayette County, West Virginia, is right on target for the signage project the group chose at the Brushy Fork workshop in September.

As part of the project, the group will place wooden signs at nine locations in the county. The signs will state "Welcome to Fayette County—Your Recreation Destination."

The team is currently seeking various permits that are required by the Department of Highways. An area vocational-technical school has agreed to make the signs at cost and we are approaching stakeholders for possible donations of materials. The group is also organizing a fundraising dinner to be held in January.

The Four Rivers group has been working on publicity for the project. We have had an article in

two area newspapers and have sent news releases to local radio and TV stations. So far, there has been no response from the latter media sources, but we hope they will be interested when the signs are ready to be placed.

If the weather cooperates, the Four Rivers group is confident that the project will be completed by the target date in March. The landscaping around the signs may have to wait until later in the year, due to the weather and proper planting times.

The team is also planning for the mid-term meeting with Van Gravitt in December. We look forward to seeing Jeff Thompson of the Appalachian Regional Commission, who will also be there.

The group would like to say "Happy Holidays" to all our new friends we met at Brushy Fork.

A glance at the future of nonprofits on-line

Fundraising in Cyberspace



adapted from an article by Marc Green in the Fall 1995 issue of The Grantsmanship Center Magazine, published by the Grantsmanship Center, PO Box 17220, Los Angeles, CA 90017.

Despite all the hype surrounding the Internet, “virtual” fundraising still appears to be more dream than reality. According to Howard Lake, an Amnesty International fundraiser who tracks developments in the field, “Very little fundraising is being conducted on nonprofit Web pages and gopher sites.”

Nonetheless, explosive change is the norm in Cyberspace. In less than a year, the state of the art could be radically different. In the meantime, what do those who have already ventured into this brave new world have to tell us?

For one thing, it’s not hard to develop an on-line presence. In the September 1995 issue of *Professional Fundraising*, consultant Michael Johnston points out that most nonprofits are already using computers for database management and desktop publishing. “They already have the physical resources to use the Internet for fundraising,” he says.

Johnston indicates a special virtue of the Internet. It connects a younger demographic segment—one that may not now be in the habit of giving large sums of money, but one that fundraisers can be cultivating for long-term relationships.

For actual cash contributions the Internet is better suited to making pledges than collecting donations. “Until on-line fundraisers figure out how to make the act of giving easier and more impulsive, it probably won’t work very well,” said Putnam Barber, who manages a forum for discussing nonprofit issues on-line. “Right now the Net is still more of a public relations vehicle than a transaction vehicle.”

One major obstacle facing fundraisers is the lack of safe, widely available mechanisms for making cash transactions via the Net. Most transactions work by scrambling e-mail messages containing the donor’s credit card number, then decoding the messages on the other end. But the process can be cumbersome, and the codes can be cracked by hackers.

One of the most promising aspects of on-line fundraising has to do with prospect follow-up. Software programs can be written for keeping track of who visits an organization’s site on the World Wide Web. A fundraiser could theoretically contact those people via e-mail.

But there could be setbacks to using these technique too freely. When you start sending out unsolicited e-mail, people become very resentful. It could create a backlash against your organization.

Also, the Net may be virgin territory for legitimate fundraisers, but it can also be fertile ground for scam artists. Any charity that intends to solicit donations on-line must be prepared to prove its legitimacy.

Another aspect that can get in the way of on-line fundraising is the feeling that computer junkies may be too detached and self-involved to be philanthropic. Such apprehension is nothing new in the fundraising field.

When direct mail was first introduced it was considered quite revolutionary. Now it’s a mainstream way of fundraising. Eventually, fundraising on the Net may be mainstream too.

On-line with Brushy Fork

Communication with Brushy Fork staff has entered the age of technology. Staff members can be reached through Berea College’s e-mail system. Addresses for each staff member follow:

Peter Hille. Peter_Hille@bera.edu
Van Gravitt. Van_Gravitt@bera.edu

Donna Morgan. . . . Donna_Morgan@bera.edu
Amy McCowan. . . . Amy_McCowan@bera.edu

New for '95!

Additions to Directory of Brushy Fork Associates

Four new teams started the Brushy Fork Leadership Development Program in 1995. This page can be clipped and added as an update to your directory of Associates.

Clay County, Kentucky

Project: Develop a riverside park

Name	Address	City	Zip	Home phone; work phone
Emond, Jerry	RT 5, Box 826	Manchester	40962	606 598-2522; 606 598-1754
Gregory, Faye	PO Box 768	Manchester	40962	606 598-2033; 606 598-2168
Grubb, Dusty	RT 1, Box 181	Manchester	40962	606 598-8557
Hubbard, Marlene	PO Box 163	Goose Rock	40944	606 598-8660; 606 598-8715
Johnson, Jamie	PO Box 421	Manchester	40962	606 598-1403; 606 598-2789
Madden, Scott	116 Lawyer St. Suite 2	Manchester	40962	606 598-3162; 606 598-6124
Nolan, James Jr.	RT 1, Box 30	Manchester	40962	606 598-3477; 606 598-6174
Pennington, John	347 Railroad Ave.	Manchester	40962	606 598-2970; 606 598-3541
Phillips, Brandi	RT 1, Box 506	Manchester	40962	606 598-6762
Smith, Carmen	RT 4, Box 194-A	Manchester	40962	606 598-3088; 606 598-5754
Smith, Kaye	120 Town Square	Manchester	40962	606 598-5069; 606 598-6111
Thompson, Perry	RT 4, Box 49-B	Manchester	40962	606 598-5726; 606 598-2192
White, LaBerta	RT 5, Box 86	Manchester	40962	606 598-6520; 606 598-5564
Wolfe, Jocelyn	RT 2, Box 807	Manchester	40962	606 598-6373; 606 598-3737

cut along dotted line



Morgan County, Kentucky

Project: Recycling education and collection program

Name	Address	City	Zip	Home phone; work phone
Brandt, Nancy	PO Box 151	West Liberty	41472	606 743-7491
Fannin, Sarah	RT 1, Box 220	West Liberty	41472	606 743-3343; 606 743-3292
Keeton, Janet	RT 2, Box 148-1	Ezel	41425	606 743-5277; 606 743-4890
Lindon, Leslie	PO Box 512	West Liberty	41472	606 743-7777; 606 743-3186
Litteral, Teresa	398 Keeton Heights	West Liberty	41472	606 743-7722; 606 743-3121
May, Lara	PO Box 55	West Liberty	41472	606 742-3293
McKean, Madeline	RT 2, Box 239-A	Ezel	41425	606 725-4630
McKenzie, Bonnie	261 Court St.	West Liberty	41472	606 742-3683; 606 742-7379
Potter, Leberta	HC 68, Box 154-22	White Oak	41474	606 743-4244; 606 743-3949
Rose, Linda	HC 68, Box 159-A	West Liberty	41472	606 743-7817; 606 743-3744
Tharp, Sharon	HC 68, Box 19	West Liberty	41472	606 743-7163; 606 743-1278
Vance, Judith	HC 68, Box 159	West Liberty	41472	606 743-7449
Williams, Eliza	688 Broadway St.	West Liberty	41472	606 743-3977

Directory additions, continued

Fayette County, West Virginia

Project: Welcome signs on county highways

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Zip</i>	<i>Home phone; work phone</i>
Arthur, Bob	104 Wiseman Ave.	Fayetteville	25840	304 574-1200; 304 574-1200
Ashley, Sarah	PO Box 466	Fayetteville	25840	304 574-1237; 304 574-1252
Handyside, Sadie	1160 High Circle Dr.	Oak Hill	25901	304 469-3993
Hurst, Doug	RT 2, Box 239	Fayetteville	25840	304 574-1237; 304 574-1176
Hurst, Sally	RT 2, Box 239	Fayetteville	25840	304 574-1237; 304 574-1252
Moye, Vickie	PO Box 554	Oak Hill	25901	304 469-2858; 304 469-4472
Naylor, Faith	Box 297	Gauley Bridge	25085	304 632-1361; 304 632-2561
Payne, Doris	PO Box 51	Cannelton	25036	304 442-9625
Pollard, Dave	PO Box 1372	Oak Hill	25901	304 465-8342; 304 574-1200
Thomas, Steve	PO Box 101	Gauley Bridge	25085	304 632-2020; 304 779-3261
Thomas, Vicki	PO Box 101	Gauley Bridge	25085	304 632-2020
Walkup, Beverly	HC 81, Box 38L	Victor	25938	304 658-4516; 304 442-4156

Ritchie County, West Virginia

Project: Landscaping high school and middle school grounds

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Zip</i>	<i>Home phone; work phone</i>
Bumgardner, Shorty	612 E. South St.	Harrisville	26362	304 643-4634; 604 643-2164
Chalos, Ann	RT 1, Box 111	Harnsville	26362	304 643-2101; 304 291-4159
Chalos, Phil	RT 1, Box 111	Harnsville	26362	304 643-2102; 800 872-2526
Collins, Theresa	PO Box 162	Pullman	26421	304 659-3338
Foster, Crystal	HC 80, Box 35	Harrisville	26362	304 643-2081
Hall, J. Patrick	RT 2, Box 27	Smithville	26178	304 340-2391; 304 643-2383
Hartley, David	RT 1, Box 223 B	Cairo	26337	304 628-3248
Ingram, Nora	HC 70, Box 1A	Auburn	26325	304 349-5871; 304 349-5871
Pierson, Amy	PO Box 233	Harrisville	26362	304 643-2189
Putnam, Nancy	RR 1, Box 24	Petroleum	26161	304 628-3356
Richards, Angie	301 E. Main Apt. 6	Harrisville	26362	304 643-4522; 304 643-2951
White, Jan	HC 70, Box 5	Pullman	26421	304 659-3142; 304 643-2717
Wooddell, Karen	RT 2, Box 36 B	Harrisville	26362	304 643-4319; 304 643-2383

Miscellaneous additions

Menifee County, Kentucky

McCleahnan, Sherri HCR 69, Box 765 Frenchburg 40322 606 768-6998; 606 768-2524

Subject listings:

Kinkeeping: recording and collecting family memories; developing traditions

Volunteerism: networking, training and recognizing volunteers

Connecting people with people. . .

The National Commission for Renewal of American Democracy and the Harwood Group have produced the Project Democracy series, Rethinking the Challenge: Reconnecting Citizens and the Political Process. The publications propose techniques for restoring citizens' involvement and trust in the political process.

Democracy in our country is in need of a good, old-fashioned revival, the kind of revival that reaches the very roots of our communities. People are looking for ways to be involved with the political process, but more often than not concerned citizens come up empty-handed and frustrated. As a result, Americans feel isolated, fragmented from their neighbors and disconnected from the political process.

The *Project Democracy Workbook* provides concrete approaches to encouraging citizen participation in politics, shifting the focus from the process to the citizens themselves.

Among the many tools explored in the workbook is technology. While technology can reach large numbers of people, it can increase isolation by “pushing people deeper and deeper into their private lives.”

How can this pitfall of technology be avoided? The authors offer several principles for effectively using technology to support public engagement and interaction:

- Technology must bring people together. It must encourage interaction by connecting people with people, not people with machines.
- Technology must focus on public concerns. It must break the silence of the public voice and create a forum that challenges the way citizens think about things.
- Technology must provide quality not just great quantities of information. It must not overwhelm participants with long lists of facts and figures, but it must sort out and clarify data in meaningful ways.
- Technology must enhance public life. It must strengthen public deliberation through discussion networks, education programs, access to outlying areas and disaffected groups. And it must allow for effective action.

In addition to these principles, other factors are critical in using technology in the political realm. The times and locations that technologies are available must be flexible. Public forums and other programs should be repeated to enable people to fit them into their schedules or to hear things more than once.

Users of technology in the public realm must be careful not to use overly technical language which could shut out some populations. Information must be accessible and usable for the recipients.

The pitfalls of technology as a forum for public participation in politics are summed up in an essay, *New Possibilities for Reconnecting Citizens and the Political Process*. The author, Richard Harwood, President of the Harwood Group, notes:

Perhaps the newest [wrong] assumption is that technology and cyberspace will reconnect people and politics. We rush to use the latest gizmos, believing the public will be duly impressed and re-engaged. In the process, little concern or attention often gets paid to the quality of public engagement. Substance takes back seat to form. . . . little is said about changing the substance of the work—just the delivery system.

Harwood is not insinuating that technology is an evil in the world of public politics, but that it is only part of the solution to a problem which stems from citizen apathy and isolation. His warning is to avoid declaring technology as the “next grand panacea” for the nation’s political ills.”

Rethinking the Challenge: Reconnecting Citizens and the Political Process is available from Project Democracy; c/o the Harwood Group, 4915 St. Elmo Avenue, Suite 402, Bethesda, MD 20814; (301) 656-3669. The set is \$20.00, plus \$6.00 s&h. Call for information on purchasing individual booklets.

The concept: On the highway to success. . .

Wide Area Network offers opportunity in rural areas

by Will Herrick

Written in the early stages of the development of the Eastern Kentucky Access to Telecommunications Project, the following article examines the long-term goals behind the initiative. See the related article on the next page. Herrick, who resides in Wolfe County, Kentucky, is a technologist and was a driving force in establishing the project.

Imagine a mall filled with not just retail outlets, movie theaters, and arcades but also with reference libraries, museums, auditoriums, classrooms, art galleries, bookstores, research labs, cooking schools, and community halls. Some people are studying. One group is getting medical information, while another is trading gardening tips, quilt patterns, and local gossip.

Now imagine that you all you need to visit that mall is a computer, a computer from your home, your local school or community center. When you get to the mall, you can meet folks from all over the world, or from just your county, or you can be virtually alone. Welcome to the Wide Area Network, the WAN.

Such a mall will exist in Kentucky. Part of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) mandated the linking of all local schools. Each school's computers will be wired together in a network, much like the telephone system. Typically the county school network will wire to the high school, and from there to the courthouse and the state's Commonwealth Information Network (CIN) lines.

The KERA WAN's primary goal is to help school kids in Kentucky overcome limited access to resources beyond the school room walls and to multiply the resources available to teachers. But if opened to the public for off-hour use, the KERA WAN has potential to reach well beyond the classroom.

The creation of the Wide Area Network presents us with an opportunity to plan our future. It offers Kentuckians more chance to be economically and personally productive in their home com-

munities. It could create jobs and help rural people maintain their way of life, offering them the advantages of more densely settled areas.

Network access already affects business location, and few businesses can afford to be disconnected. We must have a network to help generate economic opportunity to enable our young people to stay in their own communities. It is up to us who care about rural Kentucky to develop work that will pay our skilled young people and keep them in our communities.

Access develops new rural work opportunities: publishing and art related business, graphic design, advertising, entertainment, TV, journalism, multimedia, mail order, technical support, training, telecommuting, research, mapping, and federal, state and private libraries are a few. The market for a person's skills becomes as large as the network if services can be delivered via telecommunication.

The WAN also develops a local pool of technical expertise and knowledge. Tax money can be spent locally (so it is re-spent locally) for the support, design, training, and installation costs of the networks.

Through the network, schools will learn about business information needs so they can train appropriately. If KERA is going to really yield local employment, we need make it profitable to hire the local trainee.

Access to the Wide Area Network provides another way for citizens and students to keep up with the workings of

The creation of the Wide Area Network presents us with an opportunity to plan our future.

their state and local governments, and their own schools.

The first step toward reaching these opportunities is to provide uniformly cheap network access. The exceptional cost of information in rural Kentucky is due to the long distance telephone charge. The KERA WAN is fundamentally more powerful and cheaper than long distance telephone.

In the long run, if Kentucky affords the relatively small costs to provide WAN access to the public and to businesses, the

state will recoup those costs in taxes.

Other states like Montana (Big Sky Telegraph), Texas (state K-12 network), Indiana (Heartland Freenet), and Illinois (CICNET), to name just a few, have demonstrated that cheap local network access translates quickly into computer use.

It is a strong tradition in America to open the community schools to the public after school hours. By providing access to the Wide Area Network, schools will open a door to link their communities with the outside world.

The project: Providing the on-ramp. . .

Eastern KY Access to Telecommunications

The Eastern Kentucky Access to Telecommunications Project (EKAT) will establish seven sites to provide local phone access to satellite-sourced Internet data. The sites will be located in Bell, Letcher, Madison, Owsley, Pulaski, Whitley, and Wolfe Counties.

In October, Forward in the Fifth received notification that it was granted \$225,000 to establish the project. The goal is to help students and the wider community discover what kind of information is on the Internet. It will also give them a chance to learn and improve telecommunications skills.

"This is entry level computer access, some at no cost at all," explained Will Herrick, the computer consultant who is working with Forward in the Fifth on this project.

All seven sites will be publicly accessible to anyone with a computer and modem. "The real payoff here is to get the whole community involved in what up until now has been isolated to K-12," Herrick said.

Communities will become more familiar with how technology can be used as a learning tool for people of all ages. Herrick hopes this will lead to more opportunities for students to use their

new computer skills when they move on to college and jobs.

The EKAT sites will provide a large electronic bulletin board. Local residents can access data that is sent via satellite from the Internet to the local site on a daily basis. Information that local people, organizations, and schools create can be presented on these sites and will be shared with all seven sites and nationally.

Available information will include a wide variety of topics, such as education, economic and community development and government. Users may request specific types of information or sources to be added to the information received via satellite each day.

EKAT is funded, in part, by a grant from the Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Assistance Program, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Forward in the Fifth is seeking input from potential end users and invites comments and suggestions. Send them to: Forward in the Fifth, EKAT, 433 Chestnut Street, Berea, KY 40403, or fax to (606) 986-1299.

Sites for EKAT will be in the following Kentucky counties:

- *Bell*
- *Letcher*
- *Madison*
- *Owsley*
- *Pulaski*
- *Whitley*
- *Wolfe*

Listserve: interactive communication on the 'net

by Tim Walter, Aspen Institute

As part of his work to plan a strategy for the HandsNet Rural Issues Forum, Tim Walter cataloged a variety of resources on rural issues. He now manages that forum with support from the Ford and Kellogg Foundations. This article and the resource list on page 13 were adapted from his collection.

Computer networks like the Internet are a communication medium through which we can help one another solve problems. We can get in touch with experienced colleagues who volunteer to help one another. These interactive tools are the most important and powerful element of the Information Highway.

Among these tools are "listserve", or mailing lists that provide a medium for users to receive information on topics of interest. By "subscribing" (having your name placed on the listserve), you can send and receive information to and from other people on the list. If you wish to be removed from the list, you "signoff" (a way of telling the computer to remove your name and e-mail address.)

Most listserve use automated software to add you to a group. To subscribe, you send an e-mail message to the computer at its network address.

The computer address usually begins with "listserv" or "listproc" or "majordomo" which are all

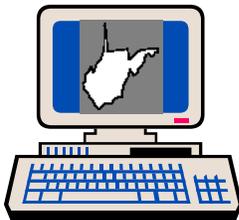
types of list management software. A few lists are moderated, which means you contact the list manager who will personally add you to the list.

To participate, you send your message to a central address from which it is broadcast to all members of the list. The habit of give and take is critical. Users should always share information and should be sure to answer other peoples' queries.

In the listserve resources on the next page, the computer address is given in the "To" line and the subscription command is given as the "Message."

For example, to sign up for the Appalachian development list, you would send a message to listserv@sjvm.stjohns.edu. In the body of the message would be the one-line subscription command: `subscribe AppalDev your name.`

For more information on listserve, contact Tim Walter at the address on page 3.



Networking in West Virginia:

Public television offers service to the computer WISE

The WNPB Information Service (WISE) is a statewide network operated by West Virginia public television. The service includes e-mail, conferences on various subjects, and education and government information.

Although WISE is not the Internet and doesn't necessarily substitute for other on-line services, there are many benefits the service provides. Information, direct communication and statewide conferencing are examples. Many organizations use WISE to communicate among members, saving expensive travel and meeting costs.

The service is compatible with either Macintosh or IBM/DOS operating systems. A modem is necessary for dialing into the network. Users also need the system software to access the information on the network.

West Virginians can use the WISE system at no cost. The network is accessible through a no-cost number: 800 375-4064. The software necessary for downloading is also available at no charge.

For more information, a Help Desk is in operation from 2:00-4:00 pm daily at (304) 293-6511.

Listserve resources for rural community developers

see related article, top of page 12

Appalachian development

A new list for folks interested in economic development in Appalachia.

To: listserv@sjuvvm.stjohns.edu

Message: subscribe AppalDev FirstName LastName

Appalachian literature

A moderated forum about Appalachian literature.

To: listserv@msuacad.morehead-st.edu

Message: subscribe applit your name

Communities and networking

Community computer networks & civic networking.

To: listserv@uvmvm.uvm.edu

Message: sub commnet FirstName LastName

Community revitalization

Includes housing, education, arts, safety, recreation, business development.

To: plflserver@bts.com

Message: subscribe frkdplan FirstName LastName

Economic development

Forum for growing local businesses.

To: majordomo@pipeline.csn.net

Message: subscribe econ-dev

Rural community networks

To: majordomo@reeusda.gov

Message: subscribe rural-comnet
or contact ttate@reeusda.gov with questions.

Rural development (United States)

List of rural economic and community developers. About 400 people participate, and the list is over 3 years old. It is quite a powerful tool.

To: listserv@ksuvm.ksu.edu

Message: sub ruraldev Firstname Lastname

Rural families

Newsletter and discussion forum for the Rural Focus Group of the National Council on Family Relations and other professionals interested in rural families.

To listserv@ksuvm.ksu.edu

Message: sub RURALFOC FirstName LastName

Rural health network

To: listserv@wvnm.wvnet.edu

Message: subscribe wrk12-L FirstName LastName

Rural history

Rural historians list. Active and friendly. Has two moderators who must add you to the list. Send an e-mail message to either of them explaining who you are and your interest in the list. Contact John Hannum: jhann00@ukcc.uky.edu or Jim Oberly: joblerly@cnsvox.uwec.edu.

Rural Internet access

A brand new resource on rural access to the Internet, including access through rural schools.

To: listproc@itc.org

Message: subscribe rural yourname

Rural sociology

To: listserv@ukcc.uky.edu

Message: subscribe rursoc-L FirstName LastName

Rural women

To: listserv@bingymb.cc.binghamton.edu

Message: subscribe rurwmn-L FirstName LastName

Sustainable development

To: Majordomo@world.std.com

Message: Subscribe sustainable-development

Telecom - rural

This list was originally created for participants of a meeting sponsored by the Arkleton Trust on telecommunications development in rural areas. Participants come from the US, Canada, and Europe.

To: mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk

Message: join arktel firstname lastname

WVA-L

Discussion list for issues related to the state of West Virginia. Local news, politics, travel, expatriate homesickness, all are welcome here. Contact: adickey@muvms6.mu.wvnet.edu (Aaron L. Dickey) or kieran@phantom.com.

To: majordomo@world.std.com

Message: subscribe wva-l

Terms for Internet survival

from the RAM of Van Gravitt



A few years ago many of us had never heard of the Internet or the Web. Now we hear about it daily. Gopher? HTTP? Browsers? Home pages? Web sites? What do all these terms mean?

Some folks feel the Web is a breakthrough that will change the way we communicate. Maybe. What is certain is that we in Appalachia should not be left behind. The Internet and the Web are tremendous sources of information as well as exciting new ways to communicate. The following list of terms is offered to help you untangle the Web and surf the Net.

bps (bits per second) - The speed information is transmitted between computers over a phone line.

browser - The software that interprets the hypertext script which Web pages are coded in, and displays the resulting graphics, text and hot links on your computer screen.

e-mail - Electronic mail. With e-mail, you can send messages from your computer to another computer just as you can send a letter from your post office to another.

e-mail address - Helps route the letter to the right "post office." You can get an e-mail address, just as you rent a post office box. An e-mail address looks like this: van_gravitt@bera.edu. In this example van_gravitt is the name of my box at the "post office" called bera.edu. The Internet is divided into different categories of computers. Addresses that end in .edu are for colleges and universities. Other addresses are .com for commercial services and corporations; .gov for government; and .mil for military.

ftp (file transfer protocol) - Automatic code for moving files or programs among computers.

gopher - A computer that helps you find information on the Internet. Gophers link Internet resources around the world so you can use them without knowing the address.

home page - The opening screen of a Web site, usually with a table of contents and hot links to other home pages.

hot link - The primary method for traveling around the Web. Hot links can be either graphic or text, usually underlined in blue. When you click a hot link with the mouse, you are transferred to another Web page.

html (hypertext markup language) - The computer language used to write Web pages.

http (hypertext transfer protocol) - Used at the start of a Web address to which you want to transfer. For example: (http://www.netscape.com).

hypertext - The computer language used to write documents and other information to be placed on the World Wide Web of the Internet. Users can access hypertext information from many different points of entry.

Internet - Global network of computers. Two or more computers linked together form a network. When you hook into the Internet with your computer, you can hop from computer to computer looking for information.

modem - The device, either internal or external, that connects your computer to a phone line. The modem allows you to send and receive data.

protocol - Protocols are a set of rules computers use when talking to each other. By standardizing protocols computers with different operating systems can communicate.

server - Large computer drive connected to the Internet that can store and maintain Web sites.

TCP/IP (transmission-control protocol/Internet protocol) - The required computer rules that allow your computer to send and receive information to other computers on the Internet.

URL - (uniform resource locator) The unique address of each Web site. Web addresses generally begin with http://www.

Web - The Web, or World Wide Web (WWW), is the part of the Internet that has a linking system which provides access to hundreds of thousands of hypermedia documents (sound clips, video, graphics) stored on computers all over the world.



A few rural access resources

Obtaining access to the Internet from rural areas can involve expensive long distance charges. Service can be skittish due to low quality phone lines. Service is improving, however, as a number of private networks are beginning to offer 800 numbers for rural access.

As technology becomes more common, so do local Internet providers, such as community-based bulletin board systems. Before subscribing to a network service for Internet access, be sure to check for local providers who may do away with long distance charges altogether.

Following is a very brief sampler of some private providers and some of their services. This sampler was adapted from a listing by Tim Walter of Aspen Institute.

HandsNet (408) 257-4500

HandsNet offers Internet access via an 800 number for \$4.00 per hour over regular rates. Data on HandsNet is professionally oriented toward health and human services, economic development, sustainable agriculture, housing, and legal services. HandsNet charges monthly subscription and hourly fees.

Institute for Global Communications (415) 442-0220

IGC offers an 800 number for Internet access at \$5.00 per hour over regular hourly fees. One of the leading bulletin board and conferencing resources for social causes, IGC has a number of "unmoderated" conference areas. Much of the information is similar to what you can find on HandsNet, but more globally oriented. IGC charges a monthly subscription fee plus hourly charges.

Compuserve (800) 848-8199

Compuserve has a rich variety of forums and is often used by business professionals. The service charges premium prices for its information forums. It offers a scaled-down version of Dialog and a service called "Executive News Service" which searches AP wire services for you. You are charged for your reading time at \$15.00/hour.

America Online (800) 827-6364

Widely popular, and less expensive than Compuserve, America Online offers an 800 number service at around \$5.00 per hour over regular rates. A clipping service, in which topics of interest are "clipped" for you, is available. Includes Knight-Ridder, NYT News Service and others at \$9.95/month.

clip and mail

We want your input and feedback. . .

for the expanded *Mountain Promise*

You may have noticed over the last couple of issues that *Mountain Promise* is expanding. We are attempting to cover more issues and topics of interest to residents of Central Appalachia (like local government and telecommunications). If there are topics you'd like to see included, feel free to call us at (606) 986-9341 ext. 6838; or mail this form to *Mountain Promise*, attn. Donna Morgan, Brushy Fork Institute, CPO 35, Berea, KY 40404; or e-mail to Donna_Morgan@berea.edu.

Topics I'd like to see in future issues of *Mountain Promise*, (or comments on past issues):

Name

Courageous Paths:

Stories of Nine Appalachian Women

by Jane B. Stephenson

Introduction: Gurney Norman

Afterword: Rudy Abramson

“Here you have the stories of nine New Opportunity School Women who have agreed to share their lives with you. These are very personal stories, sometimes painful to tell. As you read these stories you will weep; you will rejoice in their happiness; and you may be angered by the injustices in their lives. Most of all, you will be impressed by their courage, their tenacity, their determination to make significant changes in their lives.”

—Jane B. Stephenson

“Anyone with preconceptions about women with stories such as these will be frustrated by their refusal to accept any roles that others with agendas may want to assign to them. If these women were ever at one time vulnerable to the manipulations of others, these narratives show that that time is now over. In telling us their stories these graduates of the New Opportunity School ask for our attention in a confident way and then become teachers to us all.”

—Gurney Norman

Courageous Paths may be purchased through the New Opportunity School for Women, CPO 2276, Berea, Kentucky 40404. All profits from the book go to the New Opportunity School. The cost is \$9.95 plus \$2.00 shipping and handling. Inquire about discounts to non-profit organizations by calling the New Opportunity School for Women at (606) 986-9341 extension 6676.

Look for a review of *Courageous Paths*
in the next issue of *Mountain Promise*.

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