



# e-Community Strategies Program:

**Paving Our Path to the Future**



**Connect-Arkansas**

*An affiliate of The Arkansas Capital Corporation Group*

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# Connect Arkansas

Connect Arkansas, a private, non-profit, is implementing a community-based initiative that will link all Arkansans, especially in rural areas, to the internet. On March 28, 2007, Governor Beebe signed the *Connect Arkansas Broadband Act* into law to ensure the creation of a competitive broadband, or *high speed internet*, infrastructure that will not only improve personal lives, but also the economic capabilities and prospects of all Arkansans.

To facilitate access across Arkansas, Connect Arkansas, a “delivery platform neutral” entity, will focus on three major components:

- **Determination of existing broadband infrastructure in Arkansas.** An important step in facilitating access is to create an understanding of local needs. By mapping the state’s existing broadband infrastructure, Connect Arkansas will provide a level of detail that is currently not available in Arkansas. These maps will show where access is available, and more importantly, where access is not available.
- **Education.** Through the e-Communities Strategies Program, Connect Arkansas will work with community leaders to develop a strategic plan for Information Technology (IT), while working with local communities and existing organizations to provide public internet access and computer training.
- **Equipment and Access.** Through the *Breaking Boundaries with Broadband* Program, Connect Arkansas will work with existing community programs and create programs as needed to promote increased internet use and ownership of computer devices.

Through these initiatives, Connect Arkansas is working to create local opportunities for technology-based economic development. Ultimately, this will enhance the capacity of our local communities so they can be competitive in the global economy.

## 0. Foreword

The Connect Arkansas Initiative was instigated and organized through the Arkansas Broadband Initiative, a public/private coalition comprised of individuals who work in government, education, telecommunication, and various other fields. Through the avid sponsorship of Representative Bill Abernathy and Senator John Paul Capps, Governor Mike Beebe signed the *Connect Arkansas Broadband<sup>1</sup> Act* into law on March 28, 2007.<sup>2</sup>

We thank our North Carolina-based partner the e-NC Authority, which has provided ongoing support and rights to enhance the e-Communities model that they formulated and successfully implemented for North Carolina. We especially thank all of the individuals and organizations that dedicated their time and effort to develop the plan that is now being implemented to *connect Arkansas* to broadband internet. The implementation of this plan is evidence that, with the leadership of Governor Beebe, private and public partnerships can work to promote the economic climate within Arkansas.

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<sup>1</sup> Broadband is more commonly referred to as high-speed internet.

<sup>2</sup> ACT 604. Connect Arkansas Broadband Act.

# 1. What is the e-Community Strategies Program?

The e-Community Strategies Program is a community outreach effort to create local commitment and participation in bringing *technology awareness, training, and high-speed internet access* to our communities.

This e-Communities model provides a vital structure for catalyzing communities and for reinvigorating local economies so they can more effectively participate in this modern, global economy, which is heavily reliant on computers and the internet.

Part of becoming an e-Community is the process of putting technology in the same category as schools, roads, plumbing, and other amenities of civilization. It is the process of recognizing that an area can improve its future by harnessing the potential of the Internet and future technologies that will continue to open doors for your community – a door that connects your citizens and its businesses to our global economy.

**The Deliverables.** Upon the completion of the e-Community Strategies Program, Connect Arkansas will have worked with Arkansas's counties to develop the following deliverables:

1. *Strategic Plan for Information Technology (IT);*
2. Online presence for the community;
3. Knowledge and program infrastructure that will allow communities to grow, create, and maintain local technology initiatives.

Counties that complete this program will be officially designated as an *Arkansas e-Community*.

## 1.1 **Purpose of this ToolKit**

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This ToolKit was created to provide Arkansas's counties with a guide for setting up their own e-Community Strategies Program.

## 2. About Technology

Depending on who you are and where you are from, your definition of what makes a strong community varies. There are many layers: cultural, economic, educational, social, spiritual, and *technological*. It is this last element that is the focus of the e-Community Strategies Program. More specifically, the e-Community Strategies Program is a grassroots initiative to connect people to the internet and to a better future. The belief is that through technology the other aspects of your community are enhanced, making your area more economically competitive.

### 2.1 Why Focus on High-Speed Internet?

According to the Economic Development Administration, "Broadband is clearly related to [our] economic well-being..."<sup>3</sup> After evaluating various communities over a period of five years, it was found that communities which had mass-market high-speed internet, especially when compared to peers, which did *not* have access, exhibited the following characteristics:

"High-speed telecommunications is as critical to connect our regional economies as four-lane highways. Businesses increasingly rely on the internet super-highway and need that access to compete worldwide."

- Governor Mike Beebe

- ✓ More rapid growth in employment.
- ✓ More rapid growth in the number of businesses overall.
- ✓ More rapid growth in businesses in IT-intensive sectors.

This *positive impact* of high-speed internet was found to be *robust even in areas that were economically distressed*.

### 2.2 High-Speed Internet in Arkansas

According to the *2007 State New Economy Index*, which ranks states based on their ability to compete in the new economy, Arkansas currently ranks 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation. Arkansas also ranks 47<sup>th</sup> in deployment of broadband telecommunications.

**Limited Access.** While many of us take the internet for granted, there are pockets throughout Arkansas that lack this essential service. Based on a survey of 608 registered Arkansas voters, 51% of the respondents did not have high-speed internet service.

**Limited Understanding of the Internet.** In this same survey, 29% of the respondents had "never used the internet," while another 7% were unsure of what broadband, or high speed

<sup>3</sup> Gillett, Lehr, et al. Measuring Broadband's Economic Impact: Final Report. Economic Development Administration U.S. Department of Commerce. 28 February 2006.

internet access, meant. Even if broadband was affordable and was made available to every household in Arkansas, 30% of this population would not subscribe to the service.

### 2.3 **The Role of Connect Arkansas**

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**Focus on Partnership.** Arkansas contains many great technology-related resources. The key to *connecting* our state lies, not in the existence of these resources, but in the ability of the state's partners – private, public, and education – to work together to create an engine of connectivity, and most importantly, citizens that understand and can effectively use the internet and its related technologies.

**Focus on Local Involvement.** During 2007, Connect Arkansas conducted extensive research into the elements of a successful, local technology effort. It was determined that, in order for the e-Communities to be successful, extensive local involvement and ownership of the connectivity effort would be the key.

**Addressing Access and Education.** Through the e-Community Strategies Program, Connect Arkansas provides communities with a forum and the tools from which they can become engaged. Using the e-Communities framework as a guide, determined Arkansas volunteers can work together, examine local needs, and develop creative technology solutions to local problems. Connect Arkansas will collaborate closely with service providers and the Arkansas Broadband Advisory Council to facilitate access.

### 2.4 **Why the-Community Strategies Program is Important for Local Areas? Prosperity**

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The drumbeat for economic development has changed. Today, very few jobs – especially in a service economy – can be performed without some knowledge of computers. From simply printing out maintenance work orders to programming complex farming equipment, industries that are not normally associated with computer technology and customized software have now become dependant on them.

As local and national leaders continue to find ways to better their local economies, they look for ways to distinguish and diversify their local workforce and community. The e-Community Strategies Program provides this opportunity for communities to accomplish this. A community that undergoes the e-Community process is stating that it:

- ✓ Wants to change for the better;
- ✓ Is willing to plan for the future;
- ✓ Is willing to use and promote technology to make itself more attractive to businesses and more competitive with regions across the globe.

With this recognition comes the opportunity for communities to realize their own unique potential and to build a competitive advantage from which they can retain, grow, and strengthen their resources.

### 3. Evaluate: Is this for Your Community?

If your area has some or all of these characteristics listed below, your community is a good candidate for the e-Community Strategies Program.

#### **Access**

- Your area **lacks local, dial-up internet access service** – which means that if people access the internet through their telephone, they have to call a long-distance number rather than a local number.
- Your area **lacks high-speed internet service** for citizens and businesses, and/or service is limited.
- Your local public schools **do not have high-speed internet** access in their classrooms.
- There is no place where people can use the internet free of charge.**

#### **Internet Usage**

- Few businesses have websites** or use the web to improve their business.
- Your **local government entity lacks a website** and/or the website it has is not transactional (i.e. you can go to it for information, but you cannot send a message through it or pay a bill through it).
- People know the internet is important, but **local citizens do not understand how to use the internet** and/or have made no attempt to use it.
- People and businesses are not subscribing to the internet**, even though high-speed internet services are available to them.

#### **Technical Knowledge or Training**

- If people need help** with their computers, local area networks, or internet access, **they must seek it from outside the community.**
- There are **no free or low-cost technology training programs**, programs are oversubscribed and/or programs are not offered regularly.

#### **Economic**

- Your **local economy is growing at a slower rate** than surrounding areas; the economic outlook is not positive and/or businesses are not interested in settling in your area because the lack of internet access makes it seem more remote.
- Your area **does not have a long term plan for technology and telecommunications.**

If you are unsure which of these characteristics your community has, you can also take the *Quick Community Assessment* quiz located in Appendix A. Through this quiz, you will gain an overall impression of the needs in your area. If you intend to approach a local government body or foundation to support the effort, the Quiz and supporting information in Appendix A will help you be more prepared.

### 3.1 Overview of the Program

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The e-Community Strategies Program is a community outreach effort to create local commitment and participation in bringing *technology awareness, training, and high-speed internet access* to our communities.

**Participants Involved.** As this is launched throughout Arkansas, there will be three main groups that will drive the program:

- Staff and volunteers of the statewide Connect Arkansas initiative, who are available to you as an ongoing resource;
- Local officials, who hold members of the effort accountable and act as fiscal agents for grants;
- Local technology e-Champions and e-Communities Steering Committees, who marshal community support, lead the needs assessment through the planning process, and work to implement necessary changes to meet community needs.

**The Deliverables.** Upon the completion of the e-Community Strategies Program, Connect Arkansas will have worked with local communities to develop a *Strategic Plan for Information Technology (IT)*; an online presence for the community; and a knowledge and program infrastructure that will allow communities to grow, maintain, and enhance technology initiatives for their local area. Counties that complete this program will be officially designated as an *Arkansas e-Community*.

**Critical Component.** Local ownership and local government involvement in the e-Community Strategies Program are key to the initiative's success. This process is driven, in large part, by community meetings. Many volunteers also become engaged in this process as they collect information from local citizens and businesses to measure demand. Statewide and local providers are also engaged to play an active role in the county.

**Steps.** Beginning with commitment to the project and continuing through an annual assessment so that an area does not fall behind, the steps involved in creating an e-community include:

**Step 1: Commit to Being an e-Community** as evidenced by a local resolution and modest match (cash or in-kind) by a local government entity, foundation, or chamber of commerce.

**Step 2: Designate a local e-Champion** (or Committee Chair) who will act as the leader and point-person for the project.

**Create a Steering Committee** to act as a conduit for information and to organize your effort.

**Step 3: Engage the public** to involve a wide spectrum of people

**Step 4: Assess Your Community** as related to its relationship with technology and the information and communications technology elements which need to be addressed by the community's emerging strategic plan.

**Step 5: Create Your Strategic Plan for IT** to reflect your community's vision for connectivity and define both strategic goals and tactical steps for accomplishing the plan. The plan should include ways to:

- Involve people in your effort (public engagement);

- Identify, publicize, expand, and/or create a public internet access site in your area;
- Initiate computer and internet training programs for citizens and business people;
- Identify and create internet applications that could help people relate better to area businesses, government entities, community groups, or each other;
- Extend high-speed internet to your area;
- Fund defined initiatives.

**Step 6: Implement the Plan** and include marketing and fundraising efforts that address connectivity issues in your area.

**Step 7: Track and Review Progress (Annually)** so that your community can maintain its technology-advanced position once it is achieved.

### 3.2 Timeline and Use of Funds

**Timeline.** A strategic plan should take a community approximately 9-12 months to create. Local governments and volunteers should target a date (9-12 months) from the date of commitment to the project for having a plan in-hand. The timeline can be shorter if you have extremely dedicated volunteers or even a part-time staff person to assist with the effort.

Areas interested in creating a strategic plan should consider allocating the following time frames for each step as follows:

1 month	Selecting e-Champion and Steering Committee (Step 2)
4 months	Initially Engaging the Public (Step 3)
3-6 months	Assessing your Community (Step 4)
6 months	Plan creation (Step 5)
9-12 Months	Total Planning Time to Create the Strategic Plan

Note: Several of these timelines will overlap.

With the plan complete, implementation timelines vary considerably depending on the size and scope of projects undertaken. Any fundraising required for implementation may require at least nine months. After the plan has been implemented, annual reviews and updates of a community’s progress in adapting to the latest technology should take 1-3 months to conduct.

**Use of Funds.** By working through a committed volunteer base, the e-Community Strategies Program keeps costs to a minimum during the public engagement, research and planning phases. Implementing the plan will cost significantly more and should only be estimated as part of the planning phase. For larger communities, this may not adequately cover costs and should be increased. The planning sum should be large enough to cover meeting and event costs for public forums and Steering Committee meetings, travel, promotional materials, and some research fees. Usually, this sum is obtained through a local government allocation, a foundation grant or private-sector funds.

**In-Kind Donations.** When possible, e-Communities are strongly encouraged to obtain in-kind donations. For instance, a nonprofit might donate a board room or a church fellowship hall for a meeting.

## 4. Step 1: Commit to Being an e-Community

### 4.1 Purpose

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When undertaking something that involves countywide community consensus, it is very important to be clear and upfront with your intentions. If this e-Community Strategic Plan is created without community consensus, the possibility of the plan being implemented, let alone being embraced and well-received by the community, will be limited.

### 4.2 Getting Started

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It is preferable for your county government entity to initiate the e-Community process, agree that connectivity is important for their area, and commit to improving training, application development, and local infrastructure access. However, in some cases, another organization, such as the local economic development organization or another community non-profit, may work with the County Judge and take the lead. Regardless, financial support and representation from the county should be sought.

### 4.3 Local Government Resolution and Allocation

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Local government involvement is a key to the success of your e-community effort. As facilitators of community enhancements, local government should naturally take an interest in undertaking an e-Community project.

County Judges, Commissions, Quorum Court Members, Town Council Members, and other elected and appointed officials are encouraged to officially initiate an e-Community effort. The individual that will initiate this effort should be an active advocate in local government with the vision to see how an e-Community effort can benefit their area. As caretakers of their community, they will likely understand that high-speed internet access is a necessary service for citizens and businesses, and can greatly increase a community's prosperity.

Your county, working with towns and municipalities, should:

1. Initiate the effort.
2. Vote on and approve their area's pledge to be an e-Community. This usually takes place at a Quorum Court meeting or town meeting. Ideally, a staff person or elected official will place the topic of connectivity on the agenda for the meeting. The potential ways technology could benefit the area will be discussed.
3. Propose a resolution to setup an e-Community Steering Committee, peopled by volunteers, and chaired by an individual who also has the support of the county government entity. An accompanying allocation to cover costs that the community meetings may incur should also be requested and approved.
4. Select an e-Champion.

5. Encourage involvement by all relevant government officials, such as economic developers, educational leaders, and non-governmental community leaders.
6. Make the e-Community steering committee accountable to the local government entity, perhaps by creating it as a special local government effort.
7. Act as fiscal agents for grants.
8. Provide resources and information to the Steering Committee.
9. Consider using the *Draft Resolution* (see Appendix B) as a guide for creating your own resolution.

#### 4.4 **Inform Connect Arkansas**

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Send us an e-mail or letter, or call Connect Arkansas to let us know you are formally beginning the planning process. We would also like to have some preliminary information on your community and request that you also provide us with the following:

- Location (County)
- Funding available
- Reasons for creating this initiative
- Basic demographic description of your area
- Basic economic description of your area
- Estimated time of completion of an e-community plan (If known)
- Contact person with local government and contact information

Would you like to learn more about the e-Community initiative?

>> ***We would be glad to answer questions and provide resources.***

Connect Arkansas

200 South Commerce, Suite 400

Little Rock, AR 72201

Toll Free: (800) 216-7237

Phone: (501) 374-9247

Fax: (501) 374-9425

[info@connect-arkansas.org](mailto:info@connect-arkansas.org)

[www.connect-arkansas.org](http://www.connect-arkansas.org)

We also would like to hear of your progress and any feedback you might have on this toolkit and other Connect Arkansas materials.

## 5. Step 2: Find an e-Champion and Develop the Steering Committee

### 5.1 Purpose

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This section describes how your community can begin the public engagement process of recruiting volunteers. The first individual that should be recruited is an e-Champion, followed by members of the e-Community Steering Committee.

### 5.2 Choose an e-Champion (Committee Chair)

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Your e-Champion (also more formally referred to as the Committee Chair) will play a key role in the success of your e-Community initiative. Your county government unit, or sponsoring organization within the community, should appoint your area's e-Champion. An e-Champion should be:

- A natural leader;
- A unifier;
- Respected;
- Connected to many sectors of the community;
- Enthusiastic;
- A good communicator;
- A good motivator;
- Committed to the project and dedicated to seeing it through;
- Visionary;
- Hard working;
- Dedicated;
- A good collaborator;
- Knowledgeable about computers and the Internet.

An e-Champion is all of these things. Your e-Champion needs to be able to walk into any room, express and receive respect, and share ideas in an open, inspirational way.

**Responsibilities.** The person selected as e-Champion should be able to commit at least 10 hours per week on the project. In some cases, local governments have named a county or municipal employee as e-Champion. This person assumes this role as part of their normal job duties. This solution may work well for a community. However, it should be stressed that this employee should also be a collaborative leader and consensus builder with some knowledge of technology.

An e-Champion is responsible for:

- Recruiting Steering Committee members, with assistance from local leaders, to help with the e-Community effort;
- Acting as a liaison to the local government unit, or sponsoring unit, that created and funded the effort;
- Acting as a liaison to the community;
- Acting as a liaison to Connect Arkansas;
- Guiding and directing the planning process in conjunction with the e-Community Steering Committee;
- Keeping fellow committee members on track;
- Defining meeting agendas and sticking to them;
- Chairing meetings and ensuring they run smoothly;
- Creating an atmosphere of respect and enthusiasm.

### 5.3 **Form a Steering Committee**

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Members of the e-community steering committee should be representative of the geographic, racial, ethnic, economic, and social diversity in your community and be willing to contribute. This committee is charged with formulating the e-Communities plan.

Through experience, your e-Champion may already be aware of individuals that would make great e-communities Steering Committee members. However, they are encouraged to also seek out new names through the public engagement process which will be detailed in the next chapter. Within 30 days of local government's commitment to the e-Communities efforts and selection of e-Champion, the members of the e-Communities Steering Committee should be chosen.

Members of the e-Community Steering Committee should include people who are:

- Good at leading others through a process to a goal;
- Passionate advocates for technology-based economic development;
- Representative of the different people who make up your community, and respected by the community;
- Comfortable speaking in front of crowds and government bodies;
- Willing to contribute several hours each week to the effort;
- Committed in their belief that technology is critical to the future success of your community.

**Committee Structure.** Committees can be as small as 8 people, or as large as 40 people. Connect Arkansas recommends starting with a minimum of 10 volunteers, including the e-Champion, and growing the committee as appropriate.

Your Committee should include several Vice Chairs. Each Vice Chair has a particular function that they are responsible for. As the plan is created, the Vice Chair will also be responsible for writing a report based on their function that incorporates the community's feedback.

Overall, the volunteer members of the e-Community Steering Committee should consist of:

- Chair (*e-Champion*)
- Vice Chairs (*For the Strategic Plan, each Vice Chair is responsible for writing a report, based on their respective function, that incorporates the community's feedback*)
  - A. Vice Chair, Administrative and Legal (ideally, an Attorney)
  - B. Vice Chair, Marketing
  - C. Vice Chair, Research
  - D. Vice Chair, Telecommunications and Technology
  - E. Vice Chair, Programs and Applications
  - F. Vice Chair, Funding
- Committee Members

Your Community Steering Committee is flexible. Some of these positions may be combined, while other positions can be created as needed. With a large committee, the e-Champion and Vice Chairs may form a smaller leadership team to facilitate the process. REMEMBER: It is helpful for at least one member of your Steering Committee to have substantial technology and telecommunications experience.

Vice Chairs should seek assistance and feedback from the entire group. While there are leaders of initiatives in respective areas, the whole committee is responsible for assisting each Vice Chair in accomplishing tasks and making decisions.

#### **A. Vice Chair of Administration and Legal**

This person is the glue that keeps your group organized – and out of trouble! Ideally, this person will be an attorney and recruit volunteers for the team who will be able to help with administrative tasks.

If the person is not an attorney, it is the responsibility of the Vice Chair of Administration and Legal to recruit an attorney to consult with the e-Communities Steering Committee. Often attorneys will do this pro bono.

The Vice Chair of Administration and Legal is responsible for working with the e-Champion to manage the following activities:

- Devise an ethics statement with a conflict of interest/disclosure statement for the Steering Committee;
- Work to ensure that all local, state and national laws are followed;
- Analyze legal issues where appropriate, particularly where telecommunications and technology companies are concerned;
- Work with the e-Champion and Vice Chair of Funding to advocate local, state, and national officials for funds to implement all aspects of the e-communities plan;
- Review all sections of the e-community plan to ensure it is a legal and viable document;
- Gather drafts of the e-Communities planning document from the various sub-committees;
- Work with the e-Champion to schedule progress updates with the local unit of government that funded the effort;
- Summarize meetings and share minutes with the group;
- Maintain the volunteer database.

## **B. Vice Chair of Marketing**

The objective of the Vice Chair of Marketing is to catalyze and engage local ownership of the e-Communities concept. This person should oversee the following activities for the Steering Committee:

- Conduct a series of public meetings to engage and inform local citizens;
- Raise awareness of technology, technology based economic development, and the e-Community effort;
- Help recruit volunteers for participation in the e-Community effort, ensuring community-wide representation;
- Create partnerships with community agencies and organizations;
- Ensure pertinent local, state, and federal government entities are informed of the e-Community Steering Committee's progress and promise for the region;
- Develop marketing materials such as news releases, fact sheets, flyers, billboards, letters, etcetera;
- Supporting fundraising efforts by providing the Vice Chair of Funding with news coverage, success stories, write-ups, or other materials;
- Work with the Vice Chair of Administration and Legal to keep all committees informed of meeting days and times;
- Write the introduction, community demographic section, and marketing sections of the e-Community plan.
- Create and update an e-Community website. The site should contain the goals of the initiative, marketing materials, and all public materials including meeting minutes and a list of the Steering Committee members. Include meeting dates and times, and other events of notes. A website can be a cost-cutting tool in that it saves on copies and phone calls, and can help to raise awareness in the community. More than anything, it sets an example for the community. Quite simply: an internet initiative should be online.

## **C. Vice Chair of Research**

The Vice Chair of Research is responsible for compiling research, which will be laid out during the assessment portion of this tool kit. The information should be used to illustrate where infrastructure and technology exists and to show how people who do not have access to broadband may benefit from access and training.

This person should oversee the following activities for the Steering Committee:

- Recruit volunteers that can help with research;
- Decide what groups or things to survey;
- Select the Survey Questions or Criteria;
- Oversee the necessary research and ensure it is reliable;
- Summarize and present the research to the e-Community Steering Committee;
- Work with the Vice Chair of Marketing and e-Champion on the best way to present findings to the local unit of government and the public;
- Write the research summaries for the e-Community plan.

#### **D. Vice Chair of Telecommunications and Technology**

Initially, the Vice Chair of Telecommunications and Technology will work with the Vice Chair of Research to survey and analyze the telecommunications infrastructure and technology services available in the e-Community area. Eventually, the Vice Chair of Telecommunications and Technology will take the raw information and use it to recommend the best course of action for addressing infrastructure gaps and technology shortfalls. This Vice Chair should be with the steering committee to develop and then submit this course of action as part of the telecommunications and technology portions of the e-community plans

This person should:

- Be very knowledgeable about the internet, telecommunications, technology, and access;
- Recruit other tech-savvy people to help formulate a technology plan;
- Work with telecommunications and technology service providers;
- “Speak the same language” as providers.

The best volunteer for Vice Chair of Telecommunication and Technology is someone can lead your community in understanding how to create or improve the local infrastructure.

#### **E. Vice Chair of Programs and Applications**

The Vice Chair of Programs and Applications manages the following activities for the Steering Committee:

- Work with the Vice Chair of Research to determine what public internet access sites, digital literacy training programs, and web applications are available and which ones are lacking, as well as to prioritize the importance of different solutions;
- Negotiate partnerships with education, for profit and community institutions to provide necessary training programs for local citizens;
- Develop rough sketches of programs (i.e. computer training classes, e-business workshops, medical transcription classes) that solve a community need and/or get the local educational, for profit or community institution to agree to provide the missing training;
- Develop rough sketches of applications (i.e. transactional government websites, a linked health and welfare system program, one stop permitting) that would benefit the local community;
- Write the programs and applications portion of the e-Community plan.

#### **F. Vice Chair of Funding**

Initially, the Vice Chair of Funding should oversee the following activities for the steering committee:

- Recruit volunteers to work with the Vice Chair on funding;
- Find spaces where the steering committee and individual sub-committees can meet for free or low cost;
- Seek donations from supermarkets or sponsorships from companies so the refreshments can be offered for free or at a low cost to volunteers;

- Obtain any other donations required by the committee, which may include office supplies, postage, phone cards, web hosting and design, and creation and running of public service announcements;
- Work with the Vice Chair of Research to develop an inventory of community assets that can be used as in-kind contributions to leverage and obtain outside funds.

During the planning stage, the Vice Chair of Funding is responsible for identifying future sources for the implementation phase of the project, such as:

- Government units (local, state, and federal);
- Foundations (local, regional, national);
- Businesses (telecommunications companies and other industries);
- Nonprofits (usually in-kind).

This person also:

- Facilitates community partnerships that demonstrate to funders the community's support of the project;
- Works with the Vice Chair of Marketing on developing fundraising materials, which usually include a fact sheet on the organization, the organization's budget, and a description of programs and services;
- Recruits potential partnerships, sponsors, and donors, and encourages and evaluates their level of participation;
- Ensures partners and funders are informed of progress;
- Obtains agreements and commitments from the organizations to support the e-Community effort.

Ultimately, the Vice Chair of Funding works with the Steering Committee to put together the budget and funding plan for any initiatives defined in the e-Community plan.

#### **5.4 Name the Group and Create a Mission Statement**

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In the early stages of your planning process, it will be important to have a name for your group. That way, when you call on other organizations, you can identify yourself.

At this stage, consider the following name for your organization e- <insert geographic identity for your local-area>.

Once your committee is established, consider creating a mission statement. A mission statement is a concise statement of purpose. Usually, mission statements are written in one sentence (and no more than three sentences). The mission statement is a broad description of an enterprise's purpose, and may reflect local policies, strategy, values, and vision. It justifies an organization's existence by indicating what the group does, how it does it, and most importantly, for whom it does it.

Relate your e-community mission statement to the following actions:

- ❖ Promotion of technology-based economic development;
- ❖ Increasing the availability of technology services, training, computers, and the internet;
- ❖ Growth of local entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship through increased technology resources;

- ❖ Support of small businesses through increased technology resources.

The mission statement is not a static document. As your e-Community plan develops, your mission statement must change to accommodate the direction of your group. Consider revisiting it with your e-Community Steering Committee Members when you feel the group needs to refocus.

### **5.5 Create Open Communication through the Committee**

The e-Champion is responsible for facilitating communication and ensuring the e-community initiative stays on target. The e-Champion should schedule meetings so that the Steering Committee meets monthly or weekly, depending on the speed with which your project is coming together.

For each leadership team meeting, the e-Champion should invite each Vice Chair to give an update. This update should be a paragraph, with bullet points of their activities and progress. Place all of these paragraphs into one document. Provide copies of the merged document to each Committee Vice Chair to read before the next committee meeting and/or e-mail copies. This way, everyone keeps informed and is aware of their role in the effort.

You also can post this written summary to your projects website (as a leading technology organization in your area, you should be online as an example). Also on this website post:

- ❖ Minutes from steering committee meetings;
- ❖ Meeting schedules, a notice that they are public meetings, and an invitation to anyone to attend;
- ❖ Meeting agendas;
- ❖ Membership lists of committee volunteers and the leadership team
- ❖ Directions to meeting places;
- ❖ Links to partners, sponsors, and other groups with which you are collaborating
- ❖ Fact sheet on what an e-Community is and what technology-based economic development is;
- ❖ Flexible timeline for when you expect to reach certain milestones in your planning process;
- ❖ Fundraising goals and notices of new grants and allocations acquired;
- ❖ Information for the media.

## 6. Step 3: Engage the Public

### 6.1 Purpose

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This section explains how the Steering Committee can begin the two-part public engagement process. Phase 1 will explain how to create awareness in the community and to recruit volunteers. Phase 2 will explain how to reach out to people who are not yet aware of your e-Communities initiative. For this phase, the discussion also matures into how to create an e-community in your area.

### 6.2 Phase 1: Community Awareness and Recruitment of Volunteers

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Connect Arkansas recommends using public engagement to explain what an e-Community is, generate awareness of the initiative, and involve the entire community in this initiative. In the case of e-Communities, public engagement should be an open, yet guided information exchange that ultimately focuses on technology-based solutions to address community issues and goals.

These meetings provide community members with an open forum where they can share ideas and gain insight from others. The purpose of the public engagement forums is to:

- Acquaint them with the format of a public forum and get them comfortable with contributing in one;
- Introduce the concept of technology-based economic development;
- Explain what an e-Community is;
- Raise people's awareness of how technology can help them;
- Start to list community need and resources;
- Collect names and contact information from people who might be interested in helping you're your project.

In order for your community to achieve its highest potential, it is also important to involve the community as a whole and to ensure that peoples' opinions are respected.

**Recruiting Citizen Participation.** There are many kinds of leaders in a community: business leaders, civic leaders, mayors, pastors, town managers, and school principals, to name a few. Your list of people to invite to your forums should include all of these types of leaders.

Make a list of your community leaders. To help you with your list, here are a few categories in which you might find them:

- Elected government officials, such as state and local representatives, mayors, and county commissioners
- Appointed or career government officials, such as town managers, city clerks, fire and police chiefs, and planning officers

- Health and human services officials
- Educational leaders, such as community college presidents, school superintendents, librarians and school principals
- Presidents, vice-presidents and community development/outreach directors of large companies
- Leader of professional associations
- Directors of nonprofits, such as hospitals, worker-training organizations or food shelter
- Members of the media, such as the publisher or editor of the local paper, the news anchor for the television station, or the personality from a talk radio show
- Members of the telecommunications industry, such as local Internet service providers, telephone companies, cable companies, wireless providers, and satellite companies
- Small business owners
- Entrepreneurs
- Community influencers and sources of community information, such as the biggest fundraiser for the local non-profit organizations, ministers, library, doctors, and attorneys.

Invite these individuals to each of your public forums. It might help to create a phone tree and ask some of your e-Community Steering Committee members to be responsible for calling certain leaders.

In addition to this list of community leaders and stakeholders, add the names of people who have come to past forums. Include your volunteers. While you can keep this list in a rolodex, an effective way to create, manage and utilize your group of stakeholders is with the aid of a computer. It is relatively easy to create a list using Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel.

Cultivating community leaders is your first step in creating community buy-in. You need to invite them to all your meetings, call or email them with news of your progress, and consistently ask for their support. Over time, by working with these individuals and/or the entities they represent, you will build community awareness of and appreciation for your project.

**How do you get people to come?** Initially, Connect Arkansas recommends two avenues for getting people to come to your forum: calling key individuals and placing calendar items in your local paper(s), business, and government publications. Don't forget to provide food and refreshments at the meetings. You're asking people to take time out of their schedules to share their opinions.

If you are the e-Champion, call your local civic leaders. Contact company managers of local internet providers, librarians, presidents of the local chamber of commerce, religious leaders, school principals, and other community leaders. Invite them personally to the forum. Also, contact individuals who belong to any organizations of which you may be a member.

Most local papers, governments and chambers of commerce have a calendar of events. Call these organizations, find out the deadlines for calendar items, make sure your event qualifies to be a calendar item, see if there is a particular format for submissions, and then submit your meeting announcement in time to meet the deadline.

A sample calendar item looks like this:

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**Meeting on High-Speed Internet Access for Desha County.**

Open to everyone. Please come. If you cannot attend, but know of someone who would like to participate, please share this information with them.

Friday, September 22, 12:00pm – 1:00 p.m.,  
Dumas Community Center, 18 Belmont Street, Dumas.  
[www.deshafoward.org](http://www.deshafoward.org)

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**Getting the Word Out.** In addition to personal phone calls to your *List of Stakeholders*, above, also consider the following:

**Traditional**

- Ask your local chamber of commerce and economic development boards to mention the e-Community effort at meetings and in their newsletters.
- Place flyers in typical community gathering places, such as schools, churches, grocery stores, barber shops and beauty parlors, gyms, and pharmacies.
- Encourage local merchants associations and small business networks to mention it at meetings.
- Ask your local radio station to mention upcoming meetings on air.
- Distribute a press release or media advisory.

*For information on working with radio stations, and/or distributing a press release or media advisory, see **Appendix E: Marketing Tools.***

**Internet-dependant**

Some of the people on your List of Stakeholders may already have internet access. If so, use the internet to:

- Send out meeting reminders via e-mail.
- Post important dates and minutes on your e-Community project's Web site.
- Open a message board for community comments or committee postings.
- Send an e-vite or e-mail to local business people inviting them to an informational lunch on e-Communities.
- Utilize free or inexpensive surveying software and services, such as Zoomerang and SurveyMonkey.com, which make it easy to poll your stakeholders on important issues.

**Note on Inviting the Media.** Invite the media to your forums. Media professionals – reporters, editors, producers and publishers – can be strong advocates for your community effort. It is important to keep them informed and, when possible, enlist their involvement in your effort.

Several e-Community Strategies Programs have benefited from involving the media. In some cases, the e-Champion has been the editor of a local paper. In others, the editor has been a strong advocate of telecommunications expansion. There is a simple reason for this – efficiency. Newspapers used to spend hours uploading their publications to the printer using a dial-up connection; however, with a high-speed internet connection, editors can now upload an entire edition for printing in just a few minutes.

Use your media relationship well, yet selectively since reporters have limited time. Help them best use their time by:

- Encouraging them to come to the meetings that are most newsworthy
- Providing information promptly

Summarizing important meetings for them and highlighting the most important points

**Where do we hold a public engagement forum? And what logistics should be considered?** These first meetings should be organized by the e-Champion. Connect Arkansas recommends holding a minimum of three meetings in order to create connections with your community. Meetings should be convened in a neutral space, such as a community center or school gym that is large enough to hold 100 people. Evenings and lunch times may be best for most people.

Have a sign-in sheet, or pass around a stack of index or rolodex cards and ask people to supply the following information:

- Name;
- Phone number;
- Physical address;
- E-mail address;
- Do you use the internet on a regular basis (Yes or No);
- Do you have a background in technology or telecommunications (Yes or No);
- Would you like to be involved in the e-Community effort (Yes or No).

Be sure to include a note at the bottom of your sign-in sheet and/or tell attendees that their personal information will only be used for this community effort and will not be shared with other entities. Be sure to invite past attendees to each new meeting.

**Timeline and Agenda.** A rough timeline and agenda for the meeting should also be created.

**Take notes.** For each meeting, find a volunteer, who is attentive and organized, to take notes on **all** of the public comments. These notes are good reference documents for the e-Champion, will result in a “product” from the meeting that can be shown to the local government, and begin the process of providing history on the effort. Eventually, these minutes will go on your website, or perhaps, in a newsletter.

**How do you know whether or not you’re ready to go to the next phase?** You are ready to move to the Community Involvement phase when you:

- ❖ Have all or nearly all of your e-Community Steering Committee positions filled
- ❖ Feel that people are beginning support the initiative
- ❖ See many of the same faces at each meeting
- ❖ Fundraising activities have begun and you have obtained your first financial commitment

### 6.3 **Phase 2: Reaching out to the Community**

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In this phase, the purpose of meeting “matures.” With the first phase, you were explaining what an e-Community was and creating general awareness about the initiative. The goals of this second phase are to:

- Continue building enthusiasm for what your area can achieve through the e-Community planning process;
- Identify community resources and needs;

- Create a community profile;
- Create a community vision – where would you like to see your community go;
- Solicit ideas on how technology can help you achieve your community vision.

The newly formed e-Community Steering Committee should consider the best way to solicit feedback from the community. Questions to discuss as a group are:

- How many community meetings do we need in order to get a picture of our community?
- Will we have one major meeting with food? Or would several, smaller meetings be a good idea?
- Should we focus one meeting on creating a community profile, the next on creating a community vision, and the third on how to use technology to achieve that mission?
- Does the community already have a vision statement? (Check with your local and county government and your local chamber of commerce)

**Be sensitive to people’s time constraints.** When figuring out how many meetings to hold, be aware that too many meetings can be viewed negatively.

**Timeline and Agenda.** You will need to create and tailor the agenda based on the number and length of meetings. If you have more than 30 people at the meeting, split up into smaller groups to accomplish each section. Then come back together to present each sub-groups’ ideas and create a larger, merged document.

Be sure to designate a leader, a time keeper, and a note taker. If possible, post large sheets of paper with people’s feedback around the room so everyone can see their neighbors’ comments.

Later, you will verify these descriptions through research with your e-Community Steering Committee. Keep track of recurring themes and flag other items for future research. Through these public forums and following meetings, you should get a better sense of what people feel is important. Categories to pay particular attention to are:

- Where people say they have internet access, whether or not it is high-speed, and how much it costs;
- Where people say there is a public Internet access site and/or wireless location (Wi-Fi hotspot);
- Training needs that people mention frequently;
- Organizations that use their websites to conduct transactions (i.e. online banking) and organizations people wish would use the Internet more.

*If there is extensive discussion on a particular topic, or people have strong disagreements about a certain issue, you may choose to place it on a separate piece of paper (a “parking lot”) that you will come back to later. Try to make strong progress on the assigned agenda for each meeting. If necessary, appoint a committee to discuss the parking lot issues and report back at the next meeting.*

# 7. Step 4: Assess Your Community

## 7.1 Purpose

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This section explains how you can use the information you gained from the public forums and meetings to use it as a basis for formal assessment. In addition to creating a list of technology priorities that will guide the creation of your e-Community plan, you will be guided through the process of creating a formal assessment for the following:

- ❖ Community's Relationship with Technology
- ❖ Telecommunications and Technology
- ❖ Digital Literacy Training and Web Applications
- ❖ Community Institutions

## 7.2 Review the Public Forums

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By this point, you should have conducted at least two community forums and a series of e-community meetings. The e-Community Steering Community should gather together for several purposes:

- Review the notes taken at the public forums and e-Community meetings.
- Discuss the community's thoughts.
- Divide community feedback into several categories:
  - Business/Industry
  - Community-Based Organizations
  - Education
  - Faith-Based
  - Government
  - Healthcare
  - Telecommunication and Technology
- Assign topics for further research to committee members.

## 7.3 Assess

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### Assessment 1: Community's Relationship with Technology Assessment

**Community Usage.** Understanding what makes someone use, or stop using, technology will be key to your e-Community effort. Reflect as a group on how the community viewed technology in your public forums. Was their impression of technology positive or negative? Were they ambivalent? Were the people at your forums representative of your area as a whole?

Your Vice Chair of Research should consider conducting at least one survey in order to determine how your community views technology. Some research techniques are

available to you in Appendix D. Techniques that have worked well in the past include survey teams in front of grocery stores and at community fairs.

Questions to be answered include:

- Do you use a computer at home?
- Do you use a computer at work?
- Do you use the Internet at home?
- Is high-speed internet access available in your neighborhood?
- If you do not have high-speed Internet service, do you want it?
- Do you use the internet at work? Is it high-speed?
- If you do not have high-speed Internet service, what is preventing you from having it?
- If high-speed Internet access is not yet available in your neighborhood, will you subscribe once it is available?

**Public Access Sites.** The second part of the community assessment is to search for public internet access sites. These are sites where the public can access the internet for free or for a small fee. Free sites can usually be found in public libraries and schools. Sometimes free and low-cost sites can be found at coffee shops, restaurants, and business service stores such as copy stores and print shops. Document the following:

- Where these sites exist?
- Do they have dial-up or high-speed access to the internet?
- What are their hours?
- Are there costs associated with their use?
- Are there often waiting lines?
- Are they used as training sites? If so, what programs are available?
- How many people use them?
- Does demand indicate that additional sites should be opened, hours should be extended at existing sites, or a combination of the two?

The third part of the community assessment is to get a quantitative impression of your community. County profiles from the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service will be provided for each county. Other information can also be found by consulting with local and state officials and from the U.S. Census Bureau ([www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)). Construct a fact-based impression of your community. Specifically look for the following:

- Age, race, gender and ethnic breakdown
- Average household size
- Average household income
- Concentration of people per square mile
- Average educational background
- Average unemployment
- Employment by industry sector
- Are people moving into or out of your area?
- Are people who live in your area going outside of it in order to work? Do they commute to another city for their job?

Take a look at the information you have gathered, both from the public forums and your own research. Write up a one to three page document detailing what you learned about your community and how it relates to technology.

## **Assessment 2: Telecommunications and Technology Assessment**

Your Vice Chair of Technology and Telecommunications and Vice Chair of Research should work together on this assessment. There are several groups with whom they should try to meet:

- **Local government officials**
  - Inquire about cable, telephone, telecommunications and wireless infrastructure that may exist in your area.
  - Ask for assistance contacting representatives from companies providing your area with internet and telecommunications services.
  - Ask what their future plans are for adding and upgrading telecommunications infrastructure in your area.
- **State government officials**
  - The Department of Information Systems tracks information on public internet infrastructure.
  - Contact the state government official who manages this information.
  - Enlist this person in your effort and ask them to share information with you.
- **Federal government officials**
  - Understand that, at this time the federal government's tracking of internet service may be insufficient for your purposes. For instance, while the Federal Communications Commission does track service, it assumes that if one internet user in that zip code has internet access, every user in that zip code has internet access. This is not always the case.
- **Internet Service Providers (ISPs)**
  - Speak with them about what areas they serve, how many customers they have, and their plans for expansion.
  - See if they would be willing to join your e-Community Steering Committee and assist you in creating a plan for your area.
- **Telecommunications, telephone, wireless, satellite and cable companies, and telephone cooperatives**
  - Meet with the employee who represents your area. This may be a regional manager.
  - Ask them where they currently have service, how many people they serve and their plans for expansion.

*Once you have collected all your telecommunications data, sit down with the service providers in your area and determine whether they agree with your findings. This will help you fine tune your data so that your research shows greater validity to reporters, leaders, etc.*

### **Assessment 3: Digital Literacy Training and Web Applications Assessment**

As you explore your community, keep a list of computer training programs. These can range from simple programs, like *Introduction to the Internet* to more technical programs, such as *MS Access Certification*. Where are these programs offered? How often? Who offers them? At what cost?

Also, keep an eye out for Web applications. Web applications are online, interactive business processes. Does your county government have deed look-up via the internet? Does the local power company allow you to pay your utility bill online? These are examples of Web applications. Also keep a list of Web applications that might help your community attract visitors. For instance, if your region would be ideal for a scenic bike tour, consider an online map of the route with the ability to click on points of interest, or book a hotel stay or campground.

Much of the information you are searching for regarding digital literacy training and web applications will be uncovered during your interactions with community institutions.

### **Assessment 4: Assessment of Community's Institutions**

This assessment should be led by your Vice Chair of Research and Vice Chair of Programs and Applications. Set up a meeting with leaders of organizations in the following categories. Inquire as to what technology they currently use. (i.e. computers, internet, voicemail, fax, personal digital assistants, wireless), their future plans for incorporating technology, and their technology needs. In particular, look for the following:

#### **Government**

- Do your local and county governments have an information website that provides facts on the area? Usually this website would be geared toward tourists, newcomers or someone looking for basic information.
- Do your local and county governments have a transactional website for residents and businesses? This website would be interactive and might feature such items as online utility billing and bill-pay, access to deeds or other public records, GIS maps of the area, or an archive of town meeting minutes.
- What is the level of computer use in your local and county government offices? Do these offices have internet access?
- Are there any training programs for government employees and government officials on how to use the internet?

#### **Healthcare**

- What is the level of computer use at local hospitals and clinics? Do they have internet access?
- Are there any training programs for healthcare employees on how to use the internet?
- Do the local hospitals and clinics have their own website?
- Are the local hospitals and clinics able to link to other hospitals for telemedicine?

### **Education**

- What is the level of computer use at local elementary, middle and high schools, community colleges, and universities? Do they have internet access?
- Are there any training programs for students and employees on how to use the internet?
- Do any of these institutions offer their classes through distance-learning?
- Are the libraries linked to online databases, such as Lexus Nexus or Hoovers?
- Do any of these institutions offer online classes?

### **Business**

- Consult with your local chamber of commerce, business league or computer consulting business. What do they know about technology use by businesses in the area?
- What is the level of computer use at your local Chamber of Commerce? Do they have internet access?
- What is the level of computer use for the 10 major employers in your area? Do they have internet access?
- Conduct a brief poll of small businesses in your area. How many use computers and have Internet access?
- Are there training programs for your local bank employees to understand online banking? If they do not understand the technology, how can they explain it to the banks' clients?
- Ask local entrepreneurs and telecommuters how they use the internet.

### **Economic Development**

- What computer programs do local economic development groups use?
- How do they characterize local technology and telecommunications capabilities to outsiders and to companies looking to relocate?
- How do local technology plans correspond to regional, state, and national plans?
- What are the top 10 most progressive companies in the region in terms of technology?

Use the data you gather to determine which institutions are tech-healthy in your community and which ones need tech-help.

This assessment will take several months and can be conducted concurrently with the telecommunications and technology assessment. If the e-Community Steering Committee decides further research on a particular institution or business sector is necessary, consider using some of the research techniques detailed in Appendix D.

## **7.4 Formalize the List of Needs**

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Reflect on the list of community needs that resulted from the public forum. Review the additional information found by the e-Community Steering Committee's research. What have you learned? What needs are out there? How can technology and high-speed internet access help answer those needs?

Work together as a group to prioritize the list of needs. Create a document that encompasses the e-Community Steering Committee's thoughts on how the company can be improved.

### **7.5 Present Your Ideas to the Community**

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At this point, you should have several documents to share with your community. Now would be a good time to set up a meeting with your local government body. At this meeting, you can present the following:

- Community Profile
- Community Vision
- Community Relationship with Technology
- Telecommunications and Technology Assessment
- Institution and Community Sectors Assessment
- List of Technology Priorities

Focus on presenting the List of Technology Priorities. Provide all materials in a packet for later review.

## 8. Step 5: Create the Strategic Plan for IT

### 8.1 Purpose

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This section describes how the Steering Committee can begin creating the e-Communities Plan.

### 8.2 What is Included in the Plan

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**Create Your Strategic Plan for IT** to reflect the local vision for connectivity and specify both strategic goals and tactical steps for accomplishing the plan. The plan should include ways to:

- Involve people in your effort (public engagement);
- Create, support, or expand a public internet access site in your area;
- Initiate computer and internet training programs for citizens and business people
- Create internet applications that could help people relate better to area businesses, government entities, community groups, or each other;
- Extend the internet to your area;
- Fund defined initiatives.

The outline provided below is intended to guide you through the planning process. It is not an absolute. Use it as a guide.

#### **Outline of e-Communities Plan**

1. Cover Page
2. Table of Contents
3. Executive Summary
4. e-Community Steering Committee Members
5. e-Community Partners list
6. Report on public engagement, community involvement, and the planning process
7. Area Profile and general area assessment
8. Goals and Objectives
9. High Speed Internet Connectivity
10. Public Internet Access
11. Training in digital literacy, computers and internet use
12. Web Applications
13. Budget
14. Financial resources available to the community
15. Timeline
16. Community Check-Ups
17. Summary

For instance, in the outline below, there is a section designated to e-Government and web applications. If your local and state government entities already have websites for citizens to interact with government through utility bill pay, community feedback forms, public record look-up, and the like, then you simply need to make note of it in this section.

While Vice Chairs have been assigned to pull together the various sections, content should be developed and approved by the Steering Committee to ensure a cohesive plan.

You have identified community needs and your community vision. Now, what are your specific goals and how can they be implemented? You will need to spend time developing and finalizing these ideas before sitting down to write your plan.

### **Cover Page**

Your cover page should include the name of the organization, date the plan was submitted, and any other pertinent details.

### **Table of Contents**

While this is not a must, it may be helpful for people reviewing your plan.

### **Executive Summary**

This is a one-page summary of your entire e-Community plan. Your goal is to provide the reader with a brief background on your initiative and several paragraphs on what your plan entails. Bulleted information also is fine.

Note: Although the Executive Summary can be written early in the process, it is usually written after the plan is complete.

### **List of e-Community Steering Committee Members**

This is a list of your Steering Committee members and their affiliations. For instance:

John Heard, McGehee-Desha County Hospital, [www.mcgeheehospital.org](http://www.mcgeheehospital.org)  
Ken Shea, McKennon Implement Co., <http://jddealer.deere.com/mckennonimplement/>

Make note of your leaders by indicating which committee members serve as e-Champion and Vice Chairs.

### **e-Community Partners List**

This is a list of all the organizations that have helped you get information or which are interested in partnering with you on technology solutions for your area. Consider listing them by category. For instance:

#### **Education**

Dr. Thomas Cox, Superintendent, Dumas School District  
Bob Ware, Vice-Chancellor, UAM College of Technology – McGehee Campus  
Dr. Barbara Wood, Superintendent, McGehee School District

A partners list is important because it demonstrates to the reader that your community supports your e-Community effort and your connectivity goals.

### **Report on Public Engagement, Community Involvement and the Planning Process**

Summarize what the e-Champion and e-Community Steering Committee accomplished during the public engagement, community involvement and planning processes. What did you learn about the community? What research techniques did you use to gather information? How many public forums did you hold? Consider attaching notes from the public forums as appendices to your document.

### **Area Profile and General Area Assessment**

Place the demographic, community resource and community description information here. What did you learn about your community? What are its strengths and weaknesses? Where is there a need for improvement? This section should naturally lead the reader to the next section on goals and objectives – the two should directly correspond.

### **Goals and Objectives**

What goals and objectives for your area did you develop as a result of your area assessment? Keep this section brief – a maximum of two pages. Rely on subsequent sections to provide further detail on your goals and objectives.

### **High-speed Internet Connectivity**

The map you developed that plots where technology and telecommunications infrastructure exist in your area should act as the anchor for this section. Comment on where this infrastructure exists, problems with its reliability, opportunities for expansion, and challenges to expansion. Your Vice Chair for Technology and Telecommunications should use this space to outline a plan for increasing or enhancing the high-speed internet services available to your area.

### **Public Internet Access**

The Vice Chair of Programs and Applications is responsible for drafting this section, which covers where:

- Existing public internet access sites are located, the dates and times they are open, and the content they offer;
- Hours or services need to be extended;
- New sites should be located.

Consider using a map to plot out existing and potential new sites.

### **Training in Digital Literacy, Computers and Internet Use**

The Vice Chair of Programs and Applications should also draft this section, which covers where existing training programs are, what their scope is, how often they are offered, the dates and times they are offered, and any other pertinent details. This section is also an opportunity to suggest new programs or classes that could address community needs for more training in computers and the Internet.

### **Web Applications**

The Vice Chair of Programs and Applications should draft this section. Consider listing out existing web applications that are especially relevant to your community, by their category, name, function and website. Existing web applications also can be listed out under the following categories: e-Learning or e-Education, e-Commerce, e-Agriculture, e-Arts or e-Tourism.

Once you have listed existing web applications, consider listing suggestions for new web applications for your community. Two applications to definitely consider are an informational website for your area and a transactional website for your local government body.

### **Budget**

Your Fundraising Vice Chair is responsible for creating the budget section of your plan. How much will it cost for your area to achieve all of its connectivity goals? List our initiatives by line item.

### **Financial Resources Available to the Community**

Your Fundraising Vice Chair should also write this section, which lists out ideas for funding your e-Community plan. See Chapter 7 for some resources to be listed in this section.

### **Timeline**

Create a timeline incorporating a community awareness building phase, a fundraising phase, and a launch phase for your e-Community plan. Consider doing this by month/year and listing major milestones, events or initiatives. For instance:

April 2008	Kick-off fundraising effort with event at Dermott's Barbecue and Sandwich
August 2008	Have start-up funds in hand
September 2008	Secure public internet access site location
December 2008	Open public internet access site
January 2009	Start classroom conversation at <insert name> Community College
March 2009	Hold first distance-learning class at <insert name> Community College
June 2009	Finish fundraising campaign for fiscal year

### **Community Check-Ups**

Include in your plan a proposed timeline for community check-ups. Since technology is always changing, how often will you check to make sure your community is on track? Regularly research the latest in technology and see if your community can take advantage if it. In some regions, e-Community connectivity plans are updated every two years.

### **Summary**

Provide a summary for your document. This is a good place to include qualitative information on why the e-Community effort is critical for your area.

## 9. Step 6: Implement the Plan

### 9.1 Purpose

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This section describes how your community can market, raise funds, and begin implementing the e-Community Plan.

### 9.2 Market the Plan

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Now that your community has created a plan, the next step is to begin marketing and raising funds to implement the plan. Since implementation may take a few weeks or even up to several years, depending on the scope of the project(s), your efforts to raise funds may continue alongside the implementation.

In essence, there are 3 parts to implementation that must occur concurrently:

- Marketing your e-Community Plan.
- Raising funds to implement your e-Community Plan.
- Implementing your e-Community Plan.

Through marketing, people gain an awareness and appreciation for your e-Community Plan. Marketing also paves the way for fundraising, which enables people to donate time, money or services to your project.

Although you may already have received a commitment from a foundation or government entity that might enable you to move straight into the implementation phase, it still is important to market and fundraise. Why? First, local people still need to be aware of your e-Community initiative in order to participate in this transformation of their community and benefit from the programs, applications, and infrastructure created through the initiative. Second, securing commitments of funds or services demonstrates support for the project; it is not enough for people to say they are happy the e-Community Plan is taking shape or that the internet is a good thing for your area, they should also demonstrate their interest.

#### **9.21 PUBLIC AWARENESS – Knowing your Audience**

There are several tools that may help you define your marketing efforts. These tools are:

1. Application of the Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis to your e-Community Plan
2. Market Profile and Market Implications
3. Five P's of Marketing – Product, People, Price, Place, and Promotion

Each of these tools helps you learn about your audience and better tailor your message to them.

## 1. SWOT ANALYSIS

Consider your e-Community Plan from your community's perspective. In the Strengths section, list the qualities of your plan that will increase community buy-in, participation and implementation. Under Weaknesses, list those parts of the plan that need to be further built up. In the Opportunities box, list out those items you can use to make your plan a success. Lastly, in the Threats section, consider what items could make it more difficult to progress with your plan.

### SWOT Analysis Table

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>What are the strengths of your e-Community plan? Will it help a broad base of your community? Is it well conceived? Does it have lots of partners? Are technology and telecommunications companies believers in your process? Does it have local government support?</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>What are the weaknesses of your e-Community plan? Does it lack sufficient local buy-in? Does it lack support from technology and telecommunications companies? Does it lack local government support? Have similar efforts failed in the past?</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>Is there a similar effort in a neighboring area with which you could work? Is there a shortage of computer classes at the local community college? Do members of your local chamber of commerce want to help bring internet access to the area?</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>Is there a local bias against technology? Are you unable to find funding sources? Have telecommunications companies indicated they will not assist you with your effort?</i></p>

## **2. Market Profile and Market Profile Implications**

**Market Profile.** What do you know about the local population and business climate? Include information on the following:

- Average citizen's race, age, income, home ownership, number of children, education level, etc.
- Information on the overall economic landscape (i.e. number of children receiving free/reduced school breakfasts or lunches; number and type of businesses that moved into the area and that have closed; percent unemployment; ratio of small businesses to large businesses; amount of new investment in the region, industry sectors that have disappeared, new ones that are emerging, etc.)

**Market Implications.** Based on the facts from your Market Profile, you can form your Market implications by addressing the following:

- What are the groups that make up your community?
- What are the businesses or group of businesses that are representative of your business community?
- Do you see any trends? Also, what do these facts say about the future of your local economy?

## **3. 5 P's of Marketing**

Next, work through what are called the *5 P's of Marketing* and answer the following questions. This will provide you with a better idea of how you can market the programs and components of your e-Community Plan.

- **Product**
  - Describe your e-Community.
  - What are its programs/components (i.e. applications, programs, free Points of Access)?
  - What are the benefits of these components?
- **People**
  - What are the general categories of people who will be served by your e-Community effort? Categorize the different audiences you intend to serve through your e-Community effort by industry or demographic.
  - How many people may use these programs/components?
  - What do they value?
- **Price**
  - What do people have to do, give up, or pay to take advantage of the programs/components of your e-Community Plan? For instance, in one e-Community it may be critical to provide childcare in order to enable adults to attend a night program on the internet.
- **Place**
  - Where can citizens become involved in the programs/components of its e-Community Plan?

- **Promotion**
  - How can you advertise things offered by your e-Community Plan? Methods include: word of mouth (i.e. through church, chamber of commerce meetings, or public forums), booth at the local fair and handing out buttons, newspaper ads, flyers, TV ads, radio ads, posters, bulletin boards, school newspapers, etc.

## **9.22 PUBLIC AWARENESS – Marketing Your Message**

Now that you have done the prep work, you can now create a list of your goals and objectives and the corresponding messages.

- First, write down the objectives of your e-Community Plan. (This should come from your e-Community Plan).
- Next, review your SWOT Analysis, 5 Ps of Marketing, Market Profile, Market Profile Implications, and Audience Breakdown.
- Finally, create a message that combines your objectives with what you know about your audience.

For example, if your e-Community Plan lists the following objectives:

- Create one public internet access site in the old Post Office, open five days a week from noon to 8:00 p.m., with at least 200 visitors per month
- Hold a training class on Small Business Accounting (i.e. QuickBooks, Excel, and other accounting programs) from 9 a.m. to noon at the public internet access site during the first week of each month for the next six months
- Hold a training class on “Creating Your Business Website” from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the public internet access site during the third week of each month for the next six months
- Hold a training class on “How to Sell on e-Bay” from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Monday through Wednesday, the first week in October, at the public internet access site

The message you might take to your community and potential partners/funders might be:

*Desha Forward's e-Community effort connects businesses and citizens to the internet and a better future through free internet access and training programs for citizens and small businesses.*

Sometimes this message is called a positioning statement. Usually, this statement is one sentence and no longer than three. Your Steering Committee’s Mission Statement might be a good starting point for developing the positioning statement. The statement should address the following:

- State your organization’s name, purpose, vision and values;
- Lists who you serve and why you serve them;

All of your marketing materials and decisions should be centered on this positioning statement. You may want to make 3-7 key statements or messages that can be used in your marketing materials. Ultimately, your positioning statement should be reinforced by key messages.

*For Example:*

If we were to expand on the positioning statement above, our key messages might be:

- 1) *Of the 360 small businesses in the greater Dumas and McGehee area, only 20 percent use the internet and computers to support their businesses. Through Desha Forward, we intend to double that number by the end of 2008*
- 2) *There are easy-to-use computer programs that can help you better handle accounting for your business. You can learn about them in a simple, one-week training course.*
- 3) *By investing in the future of your company – through a website and computer accounting software – you can speed the rate at which you do business.*

### **9.23 PUBLIC AWARENESS – Marketing Tactics**

Now that you have defined a profile of your audience (9.21) and created your message (9.22), you are ready to choose your marketing tactics. A full list of tactics is included in Appendix E. Topics covered include:

- Press Releases
- Media Advisories
- Radio Public Service Announcements
- Advertising

Based on the audience you need to reach, choose the tactics that will best reach your target audience.

## **9.3 Raise Funds to Implement the Plan**

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### **9.31 RAISING FUNDS – Identify Your Needs**

Before you can begin implementing any of the programs/components that were identified in your e-Community Plan, you need to first figure out what it is that you need and what resources are available that can provide you with what you need.

Review the list of individuals and companies that have partnered with your e-Community effort. Do any of them give provide sources of funding – private and public? Put them on your “List of Asks.”

Next, if you have not already done so, conduct research on your community. Look for foundations, corporations, educational institutions, small businesses, and nonprofits. Would any of them be able to donate one, or several, of your defined e-Community initiatives? For instance, would a local food bank be willing to donate space within its building for a public internet access site in exchange for extending the wiring to include their offices?

Finally, conduct research at the national level. Consult with your state library, which may have a subscription to The Foundation Center online catalogue, or another CD or online resource for tracking down potential funders. Often these databases let you put in the type of funding

you are looking for and a geographic area, and they will return a list of possible foundations to approach. National groups to consider include the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Microsoft Foundation.

### **9.32 RAISING FUNDS – Making your Request**

Once you have identified your needs, contact each name/organization on the list and gather the following information:

- When do they prefer to receive requests?
- When you submit your request, do you need to use one of their forms, or do you need to follow one of their formats?
- What type of information do you need to give them, and in what format (particularly financials)?
- What is their normal giving amount? (some foundations have limitations)

Note: This may or may not apply to individuals in your community who may often give to important initiatives.

Once you have found out the criteria and format for making your request, proceed with either filling out the application, setting up a meeting to review your initiative in depth, or simply asking for money. The way you go about this will depend on the organization.

Keep in mind that if the group you are approaching is unable to give money, they may be able to donate something equally as valuable: office furniture, transportation, electricity, equipment, office space, or even food for an event.

### **9.33 RAISING FUNDS – Following Up with the Potential Donor**

Whether or not a group gives you money, you have invested your time in educating them about your effort and thus should continue to maintain the relationship. Sometimes if they cannot give money to you, they may know of someone else who can. Consider sending out a brief letter or update on a quarterly or semi-annual basis providing updates on fundraising, accomplishments, and what the initiative has meant to your community. Include quotes from local citizens, businesses or organizations that have directly benefited from your effort.

## **9.4 Implement the Plan**

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### **9.41 IMPLEMENTATION – Timeline**

Create a realistic timeline for raising funds and implementing the phases of your e-Community Plan. How long will it take to locate and wire a public internet access site, furnish it, purchase or receive computers, and find an internet service provider? By what date do you want to have accomplished this? Consider breaking down each project into milestones.

On longer projects, it is very important to communicate the timeline. Also, achieving milestones enables your e-Community Steering Committee to feel a sense of accomplishment. This keeps momentum going.

Depending on your project, your timeline for implementation could take a few weeks or several years.

#### **9.42 IMPLEMENTATION – Actual**

As you implement your project, remember to celebrate milestones, thank volunteers and partners, keep funders informed, keep providers informed, and continue updating your local and state government entities.

## 10. Step 7: Track and Review Progress

Throughout this ToolKit, we have explored why areas need to be connected to the internet, how to identify programs and applications that might enhance people's experiences, and ways of promoting and implementing your efforts.

### 10.1 **Purpose**

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This section explains the importance of moving your community forward so it can continue to evolve technologically and be globally competitive, and how your community can maximize the effectiveness of the technological advances you have created.

### 10.2 **Are Next Steps Needed?**

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After you have presented to the local government body the progress you made with your completed e-Communities Plan, consider changing your e-Community Steering Committee. Some of your volunteers will be looking for new challenges. Others will have matured within the organization and will seek additional responsibilities. Change as a group and select new leaders – even a new e-Champion, if needed.

The role of the new committee is to continue to oversee ongoing implementation plans, to monitor the investments that have already been made and to identify new possibilities. On an annual or biannual basis, your committee should conduct another assessment of the local area. Are you now at the forefront of technology? Have new economic sectors sprung up that need your support?

For instance, say a lodge in your area has created a series of mountain biking trails for summer use. What was once a seasonal business is now nearly year-round with riders coming in the summer months. In addition to new pages on the website, the lodge might want to link local restaurants, advertise on biking websites, contribute information to message boards, or send out e-invitations to past guests. What if the company took information a step further by incorporating Global Positioning Systems into the mountain bikers' experience? As the bikers ride down the trail, they could come to overlooks where a handheld device could identify some of the scenery, such as the town hall spire or a cliff where a local hang-gliding company sells lessons.

Ask your local government body to pass a resolution mandating the technology check-up as an annual or biannual event. Remember to THINK BIG. Designate the e-Community Steering Committee as an ongoing entity for conducting this check-up and for helping to ensure your area's technological future is as rosy as possible.

### 10.3 **Technology Based Economic Development**

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This effort was created to provide your e-Community with the opportunity to integrate technology and to take technology-based economic development one step further. By refreshing the membership of your e-Community Steering Committee and creating annual check-ups, you ensure that future generations of your community will pay attention to technological advances and seek them for your area.

The work you have done so far will also help to define an economic strategy based on technology for your region. Technology access, training, and classes support this strategy through such tactics as:

- Enhancing the overall infrastructure of an area;
- Retraining dislocated workers for new, better-paying jobs;
- Increasing the level of technology education and know-how of citizens;
- Providing entrepreneurs with new ways of speeding their business processes;
- Creating a resource map of an area that can be used for future economic planning.

By integrating and evolving your e-Community Plan into the future economic strategy of your area, you ensure continued success.

# 11. Appendix

## **A. Quick Community Assessment**

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The purpose of this assessment is to provide you with concrete, “listable” reasons for undertaking an e-Community effort. When working toward government or foundation approval and funds for a project, the ability to highlight and support these reasons can become very important.

*This process should take from five minutes to a few hours, depending on how much information you already have.*

### **Assessment**

Please answer the following questions. Although you may not need to have detailed answers at this point, you do need to be able to support your assertions.

#### **Access**

1. Are high-speed internet services available to all citizens and businesses in your area?
2. Does your area lack local, dial-up internet service? Do people who use the telephone to access the internet have to place a long-distance call in order to reach their internet service provider?
3. Are citizens and businesses using the internet? If high-speed internet access is available, are people subscribing?
4. Is there at least one place in your area where people can use internet and computers for free?

#### **Internet Usage**

5. Do a majority of local businesses, government entities and community groups have a website that facilitates communication and enables transactions between citizens and government?

#### **Technical Knowledge or Training**

6. When people, schools, government and businesses need to install a computer system or have questions about computers and the Internet, do they have to seek help from outside the local area?
7. Are there free or low-priced technology and computer training programs available to citizens and businesses in your area? Are they offered regularly, and suited to all skill levels? Are the classes well attended?

#### **Economic**

8. Is your local economy growing at the same rate as or faster than other parts of Arkansas? How does it compare to the rest of the nation? Is your future economic outlook positive?
9. Does your area have a long-term technology and telecommunications plan?
10. Are young people returning to your area after college? Do you recruit them back to help build your technology-focused workforce?

## Getting the Answers

### Access

#### **1. Are high-speed internet services available to all citizens and businesses in your area?**

An e-Community initiative ensures there is a movement working to see that all citizens and businesses in an area have access to high-speed internet services at affordable prices. If your area has little-to-no access to high-speed internet services, you need an e-Community effort. If a majority of homes and businesses in your area already have high-speed Internet service, you may still need an e-Community effort. Connectivity for the remaining citizens and businesses may be a priority or you may choose to focus your e-Community effort on web applications, for instance.

If you do not know whether you have high-speed access, you need to research the internet service providers and telecommunications companies in your area. A list of providers in Arkansas is also available on Connect Arkansas's website at [www.connect-arkansas.org](http://www.connect-arkansas.org).

#### **2. Does your area lack local, dial-up internet service? Do people who use the telephone to access the internet have to place a long-distance call in order to reach their internet service provider?**

While high speed internet service is preferable for economic development (since more information can be passed at faster speeds), you have to walk before you can run. For the short-term, it may be easier for people to access the internet via their telephone line. This can be quite expensive if they are paying long-distance rates in order to reach a service provider. As a first step, it might be important to ensure that local, dial-up internet service is available to all citizens.

#### **3. Are citizens and businesses using the internet? If high-speed internet access is available, are people subscribing? *If not, more public awareness and training is necessary.***

By contacting local telephone, telecommunications and internet service providers, you may be able to determine where they have service and where they do not. If people are not opting for high-speed Internet service, you need to find out why. Is it the cost? A lack of education? Contact citizens or businesses in that area to inquire. As a barometer for local businesses, you might also contact your local chamber of commerce.

#### **4. Is there at least one place in your area where people can use internet and computers for free?**

An e-Community initiative strives for at least one community public internet access site, a location where area citizens can use the internet and computers for free. If one exists in your area already, an e-Community initiative might look at expanding services to meet demand. Public internet access sites help build awareness of the internet and its possibilities, and enable businesses and individuals to take advantage of opportunities through technology.

Typically, public Internet access sites are found in libraries, community centers and at schools. These sites may or may not be the most comfortable or user-friendly for underserved populations. Are there other natural gathering spots in the community where underserved populations would be more comfortable?

If your area does not have a public internet access site then you have one reason for pursuing an e-Community Strategies Program: access.

If your area has at least one public internet access site, you need to look deeper. How many public internet access sites does your area have? Are they easily accessible? Is demand for them high from all populations? Do the hours work? Is their funding secure and adequate? Depending on

the answers to these questions, you may have additional reasons for your e-Community effort: expanding and ensuring access.

### **Internet Usage**

**5. Do a majority of local businesses, government entities and community groups have a website that facilitates communication and enables transactions between citizens and government?**

An e-Community effort helps businesses, local governments and community groups utilize their websites as a tool for increasing communication and interaction with citizens.

For business, this could mean that the e-Community effort might launch an e-business workshop that details how to set up a company website, purchase items through the internet, maintain inventories, conduct research, and offer goods and services for sale online. An e-Community effort also might help a town set-up utility billing and bill-pay online. Through an e-Community effort, a food bank might be able to send out alerts when reserves are getting low, link citizens to mapping tools for directions to can drop-off centers, or enable citizens to give cash donations online. Geographic information Systems (GIS) technology can be used to create detailed maps accessible through the internet, providing all kinds of information to citizens – it is more than just a mapping tool.

If the majority of entities in your area have transactional websites, your e-Community effort may focus on reaching those organizations that are not yet online and/or assisting organizations by increasing awareness of their websites. If few groups in your area are online, you may focus on training efforts or application creation and training programs that will help them serve local paper better.

### **Technical Knowledge or Training**

**6. When people, schools, government and businesses need to install a computer system or have questions about computers and the Internet, do they have to seek help from outside the local area?**

Importing computer and internet assistance can be quite expensive. Additionally, the lack of locally available resources might provide a source of frustration. If this is a universal need, it may be an opportunity for your e-Community Strategies Program. Consider creating a nonprofit to serve local technology needs or simply creating a band of roving volunteers willing to take on projects.

**7. Are there free or low-priced technology and computer training programs available to citizens and businesses in your area? Are they offered regularly, and suited to all skill levels? Are the classes well attended?**

An e-Community Strategies Program ensures that businesses and citizens have access to training on computers and the internet.

If your area offers a variety of programs for a variety of skill levels, you may not need to focus on this in your e-Community effort.

If your area lacks programs for businesses or individuals, does not seem to meet demand, offers programs in a location or locations that are not convenient for all citizens, or seems to have other impediments, you may have a reason for your e-Community effort: increased training opportunities.

## **Economic**

### **8. Is your local economy growing at the same rate as or faster than other parts of Arkansas? How does it compare to the rest of the nation? Is your future economic outlook positive?**

Through e-Communities and technology-based economic development, areas can reverse downward economic trends and reach for a better future.

In order to answer this question, you may need to look at a variety of evidence. Ask a librarian for assistance or consult with the U.S. Census Bureau ([www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)), U.S. Department of Commerce, Arkansas Economic Development Commission, regional economic development councils, and local economic developers and government leaders. What do the statistics say? Statistics to look for and compare could include:

- Unemployment rates
- Number of layoffs
- Poverty rates
- Median household or per capita incomes
- Number of new, small business start-ups
- Number of identifiable entrepreneurs who are using the Internet

You may also want to look at the average or median age of citizens in your county and the percent working age population. Is your population getting older and the percentage of workers shrinking?

You might look at your area's net migration, or the number of people gained or lost by your area on an annual basis. If your area has negative net migration, meaning it lost more people than it gained, then this may indicate a weak local economy, job losses or another event.

Anecdotally, do you know if a large number of local citizens live in your community, but commute elsewhere to work? You need to analyze why. Is there a lack of locally available jobs in their field or to their liking? If so, would they work locally if they could?

### **9. Does your area have a long-term technology and telecommunications plan?**

Consult your town, city, county, and state government. Is there a plan for enhancing the technology and telecommunications infrastructure in your area? Does it project outward for at least five years? Is it adequate? Does it watch for new technologies? An area that is "tech-forward" one year can easily be forgotten or outdated three years later. Technology is constantly evolving. Your area should have a plan in place for catching up and then remaining ahead.

## **Resources**

To answer these questions, you may need to reference statistics from:

- Economic Development Administration at [www.eda.gov](http://www.eda.gov)
- Federal Communications Commission at [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov)
- National Association of Counties at [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org)
- National Association of Cities at [www.associationofcities.org](http://www.associationofcities.org)
- National Association of Regional Councils (of Government) at [www.narc.org](http://www.narc.org)
- Small Business Administration, [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)
- US Census Bureau, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
- US Department of Commerce, [www.commerce.gov](http://www.commerce.gov)

In Arkansas:

- Arkansas Economic Development Commission, [www.arkansasedc.com](http://www.arkansasedc.com)
- Arkansas Public Service Commission, [www.arkansas.gov/psc](http://www.arkansas.gov/psc)
- Arkansas Department of Labor, [www.state.ar.us/labor](http://www.state.ar.us/labor)
- Arkansas General Assembly, [www.arkleg.state.ar.us](http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us)
- Higher education system, including community colleges, 4-year colleges and universities

In your area:

- Internet
- Local leaders
- Local companies
- Local chamber of commerce
- Local government
- Local economic development board or commission
- Telecommunications companies
- Telephone book

**10. Are young people returning to your area after college? Do you recruit them back to help build your technology-focused workforce?**

This question concerns “brain drain:” promising members of the community go to college and choose to take the skills they gain there to another region, usually an urban area, rather than return to a hometown in which they see few opportunities. If you do not know the disposition of your area’s youth, consult your local chamber of commerce, economic development commission, or high school principal. If young people are not returning, then you understand one of the motivations for an e-Community effort: to prevent your community’s skilled workforce from shrinking, aging or dying out by ensuring young people see their hometown as having the same amenities and opportunities as its urban counterparts.

## B. Draft Resolution

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Consider using the following as a guide for creating your own resolution.

The <Governing Body Name> of <Municipality Name or Area> government resolves on this <Date> day of <Month>, <Year> to create an e-Community effort for the following reasons:

- The quality of life and economic prospects of <Local Area> can be improved through the development of technology infrastructure, internet access, web applications and digital literacy training.
- Bringing increased technology into the community through an e-Community effort is a priority for the local government.
- The e-Community effort will help citizens to develop a new way of thinking that is based on being better connected – to each other, their local government and businesses, and other communities and the world.

The e-Community effort will be locally driven by volunteers. The e-Communities Steering Committee will be chaired by <Insert Name>, henceforth known as the e-Champion. The e-Champion is responsible for recruiting the e-Communities Steering Committee, which will have no less than 10 volunteers. Volunteers should be representative of the geographic, population, institutional, and economic diversity of our community.

Members of the e-Community Steering Committee should be representative of the following sectors:

- Business/Industry
- Faith-Based
- Media
- Community-Based Organizations
- Government
- Technology
- Education
- Healthcare
- Telecommunication

The e-Champion and e-Communities Steering Committee are responsible for presenting to the <Governing Body Name> on <Date or Dates>.

The e-Champion and e-Communities Steering Committee are responsible for:

- Assessing <Municipality Name or Area> in terms of technology infrastructure, public internet access, digital literacy training, and web applications;
- Developing a Technology and Connectivity Plan for <Municipality Name or Area>;
- Presenting the plan to <Governing Body Name>.

As part of the plan development, the e-Champion and the e-Community Steering Committee will:

- Create an opening process;
- Represent all geographic and population sectors within the community;
- Create a plan that aims to serve all community sectors and constituencies currently lacking in technology infrastructure, access, applications, and training;
- Encourage two-way communications between volunteers and the citizens that they are trying to serve;
- Encourage regional sharing of ideas and strategies for helping more than just the local community benefit from technology.

The <Governing Body Name> of <Municipality Name or Area> agrees to act as the fiscal agent for the e-Community effort.

## C. Useful Resources for Each Step

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### For Chapters 1-3 - **Evaluate: Is this for your Community?**

More information on the Connect Arkansas and e-Community Strategies Program can be found on the Connect Arkansas website [www.connect-arkansas.org](http://www.connect-arkansas.org). Information on telecommunications in the US, particularly rural America, can be found at the:

- Federal Communications Commission (FCC) website and its section on telecommunications service in Rural America, currently found at [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov) and its section on updates and releases currently found at [www.fcc.gov/updates.html](http://www.fcc.gov/updates.html).
- United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Division at [www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov).
- United States Census Bureau, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

### For Chapter 4 – **Step 1: Commit to Being an e-Community**

Your best resources for completion of this section are your advocates within local government and your reasons for wanting to be an e-Community. If you are outside of local government and are advocating that the entity to agree to an e-Community Strategies Program, consider reading the following for details on the inter-workings of local government entities.

- State and Local Government, The Essentials, Bowman, et al., c. 2002.
- State and Local Government, Saffell and Basehart, c. 2004.

### For Chapter 3 – **Step 2: Find an e-Champion and Develop the Steering Committee**

Resources include:

- Civic Practices Network, [www.cpn.org](http://www.cpn.org).
- National Civic League, [www.ncl.org](http://www.ncl.org).

### For Chapter 4 – **Step 3: Public Engagement**

Consider visiting the following online resources for more information on community meetings and how to run them:

- *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*, John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight, c. 1993.
- Sustainable Communities Network, <http://www.sustainable.org/>.

### For Chapter 7 – **Step 6: Implement the Plan**

For fundraising ideas, look to:

- Association of Fundraising Professionals, [www.afpnet.org](http://www.afpnet.org);
- *Breakthrough Thinking for Nonprofit Organizations: Creative Strategies for Extraordinary Results*, by Bernard Ross and Clare Segal; Jossey-Bass/John Wiley and Sons, 2002;
- Chambers of Commerce in your area;
- *Corporate and Foundation Fund Raising: A Complete Guide from the Inside*, by Eugene A. Scanlan; Aspen Publishers, Inc., 1997;
- The Foundation Center, [www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org).

## For Chapter 7 – Ongoing: Track and Review Progress

For the latest in technology, consider reading magazines devoted to the topic. Publications might include:

- Always On Magazine, [www.alwayson.goingon.com](http://www.alwayson.goingon.com).
- CNETnews, <http://news.cnet.com>.
- The Economist, [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com).
- Government Technology Magazine, [www.govtech.net](http://www.govtech.net).
- Information Week, [www.informationweek.com](http://www.informationweek.com).
- MobileMag: The Mobile Technology Magazine, [www.mobilemag.com](http://www.mobilemag.com).
- Small Times, [www.smalltimes.com](http://www.smalltimes.com).
- Tech News World, [www.technewsworld.com](http://www.technewsworld.com).
- Wired Magazine, [www.wired.com](http://www.wired.com).

## **D. Some Research Techniques**

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Consider utilizing some of the research techniques below to learn more about your community or a specific group within your community (i.e. small businesses or stay-at-home parents).

### **Walk-Up Surveys**

Walk-up surveys are usually conducted in public or community spaces, such as street fairs, grocery store parking lots, malls or street corners. When conducting a walk-up survey, it is important to get permission from the property owner and/or check with local governments to ensure your survey can be conducted before moving forward.

Walk-up surveys involve you sitting or standing behind or near a table with information about your organization. People are free to walk up to you should they wish.

The surveys themselves usually include no more than 15 questions and can be conducted or filled out in less than three minutes. Walk-up surveys often contain questions that fall into three distinct areas:

- Information on the respondent;
- Information on the respondent's level of knowledge or awareness about your product or service, or the type of product or service you offer;
- Information on the respondent's likes and dislikes as they pertain to your product or services.

Here is an example of a walk-up survey that gauges how people feel about and use the Internet:

**WALK-UP SURVEY**

<b>YOUR OPINION COUNTS!</b> Feel free to check more than one answer.		
<b>Are you:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
<b>Age:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 15 to 25 <input type="checkbox"/> 36 to 45yrs <input type="checkbox"/> 55 to 65 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/> 16 to 35 <input type="checkbox"/> 46 to 55 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> 65yrs +
<b>Highest level of education attained:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary to some high school <input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate or GED <input type="checkbox"/> Some college or community college <input type="checkbox"/> College Graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Professional degree	
<b>I live in</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> City 1 <input type="checkbox"/> City 2 <input type="checkbox"/> City 3 <input type="checkbox"/> City 4	<input type="checkbox"/> City 5 <input type="checkbox"/> City 6 <input type="checkbox"/> City 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<b>My home has:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Dial-up Internet Service <input type="checkbox"/> Access to high-speed, but I don't buy it	<input type="checkbox"/> High-speed Internet Service <input type="checkbox"/> No Internet Access <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
<b>My work place has:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Dial-up Internet Service <input type="checkbox"/> Access to high-speed, but I don't buy it	<input type="checkbox"/> High-speed Internet Service <input type="checkbox"/> No Internet Access <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
<b>I use computers:</b> <i>Check all that apply.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> At work or school only <input type="checkbox"/> Every day <input type="checkbox"/> A few times each month <input type="checkbox"/> I have never used a computer	<input type="checkbox"/> At home <input type="checkbox"/> A few times each week <input type="checkbox"/> Very occasionally during the year
<b>I use the Internet:</b> <i>Check all that apply.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> At work or school only <input type="checkbox"/> Every day <input type="checkbox"/> A few times each month <input type="checkbox"/> I have never used a computer	<input type="checkbox"/> At home <input type="checkbox"/> A few times each week <input type="checkbox"/> Very occasionally during the year
<b>I feel the Internet is critical to getting:</b> <i>Check all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Work done <input type="checkbox"/> A job <input type="checkbox"/> Information (i.e. news and healthcare resources) <input type="checkbox"/> I do not think the Internet is critical	<input type="checkbox"/> A good education <input type="checkbox"/> In contact with friends and family
<b>The business you own or work for would benefit from:</b> <i>Check all that apply.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Training on how to use computer and the Internet <input type="checkbox"/> Advice on expanding the business <input type="checkbox"/> Advice on which computer programs could help with customer management and increasing sales <input type="checkbox"/> Technology services such as computer repair, troubleshooting and network administration <input type="checkbox"/> Learning how to use the Internet for sales <input type="checkbox"/> A class on creating a Web site <input type="checkbox"/> Web hosting services <input type="checkbox"/> Information on advertising online	
<b>For me to take advantage of classes, they would have to be offered</b> <i>Check all that apply.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Between 9:00a.m. and 3:00p.m. <input type="checkbox"/> In the evenings <input type="checkbox"/> On weekends	<input type="checkbox"/> Between 3:00p.m. and 6:00p.m. <input type="checkbox"/> Early in the morning
<b>My biggest obstacle to taking a class is:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Time off from or away from my family <input type="checkbox"/> Cost <input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelmed by technology <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Child care <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of interest
<b>Had you heard about the e-Community effort before today?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Thank You for your time and insight today.</b> <b>- e-Community Steering Committee Volunteer</b>		

When conducting a walk-up survey, remember to immediately identify who you are (first name only is fine) and who you are with, and ask for the respondent's permission before proceeding. In some cases, incentives such as coupons or t-shirts can be offered to survey participants.

## **Focus Group**

The purpose of focus groups is to further explore a particular aspect of the e-Community Plan in depth. Depending on the group you are trying to learn more about, your focus group may include small business people, unemployed individuals, local government representative, medical professionals, farmers, or members from another major sector of your local economy. Other groups you might poll include educators, workforce training professionals, chamber of commerce members, and economic developers. The type of participants would depend on what type of in-depth information you are trying to collect.

For instance, if your e-Community Steering Committee determines that easily accessible technology education for single parents is a priority, you might invite single parents to a focus group. You may discover from them that child care and transportation are their two biggest obstacles to learning how to using technology.

Focus groups take place in neutral settings free of distractions. Good options are meeting rooms and community halls. You need seating for all participants and good lighting.

For a focus group to be successful, you need an impartial moderator, who is more interested in drawing opinions out of the participants than in speaking. Time your questions or activities so they take no more than two hours. Provide drinks and snacks if possible. Ideally, you should have a minimum of six participants and a maximum of 15.

Focus group participants sometimes receive some sort of compensation for their time. Be sure to provide light refreshments. If your e-Community Steering Committee is able to solicit gift certificates to local businesses, that might also be an appropriate reward for participants.

## **One-on-One or Small Group Meetings**

When you are interested in learning more about a certain population, you often can save time by setting up one-on-one or small group meetings with the individuals or organizations already serving that population.

For instance, rather than holding a focus group and recruiting 10 small businesses to attend, consider talking to your chamber of commerce. Although Connect Arkansas recommends getting information first-hand, since it is your most direct source of information, a general overview of how a certain sector functions may be helpful and satisfy certain research needs.

## **Online Surveys**

There are several free or low-cost online survey companies out there, including [www.SurveyMonkey.com](http://www.SurveyMonkey.com). If your e-Community Steering Committee decides to survey businesses that currently have Internet access to see what computer programs would be most useful to them, then an online survey medium might be appropriate.

## Telephone and Direct Mail Surveys

Telephone and direct mail surveys are mentioned here, but this is a very costly way to gather market data and should not be undertaken unless the project is well funded. Also, when you use this survey method, you are subject to rules and restrictions that may limit your efforts. For instance, telephone surveys could be conducted by volunteers, but might require multiple phone lines and long distance service. Direct mail pieces could also contain a survey element, but would require design, printing and postage costs. If your e-Community Steering Committee determines that a telephone or direct mail survey would be the best means to reach your target population, consider working with a professional marketing firm on this effort.

## Resources

- American Statistical Association, [www.amstat.org](http://www.amstat.org).
- Entrepreneur Magazine, [www.entrepreneur.com](http://www.entrepreneur.com), see the article entitled "Conducting Surveys and Focus Groups," by Mie-Yun Lee
- Focus Groups: *A Step-by-Step Guide* by Gloria Bader and Catherine Rossi, 2002
- Marketing Research Association, [www.mra-net.org](http://www.mra-net.org).

## E. Marketing Tools

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The Vice Chair of Marketing should use these tools to promote public forums, encourage donations, enlist volunteers, and build awareness for specific e-Community projects. They are offered here to give you an idea of some of the different methods you can use to reach people. Not all of the below tactics need to be used since each e-Community effort will be unique.

### Public Relations

Public relations involves relationships with the news media who, in turn, may mention you in stories and/or profile your organizations. Tactics used would include telephone and in-person story pitches to the media, news releases, media advisories, guest columns, op-ed pieces, etc. When conducting media relations efforts, it is critical to have a good media contact list, which is actively updated, and a media plan. A media plan is a month-by-month outline of when you are going to pitch certain ideas to the media. Look to tie your approaches to certain milestones or to certain events.

### Media Advisory and Press Releases

There are two main documents you can use to contacting the media: the media advisory and the press release.

- Media advisory: provides basic information on an event and looks similar to a bulleted invitation.
- News release: provides information in paragraph style and is more in-depth.

Usually, you can pair the media advisory and news release together to promote an event. You draft and send out the media advisory to invite the media to an event. When they arrive (or if they were unable to attend, but still want to cover your event), you present them with a news release that indicates what the event signifies, helping to guide their story and questions.

Media advisories are typically delivered to print and online publications about a week before an event. They are delivered to broadcast outlets, such as radio and television, two to three days before an event.

News releases should be sent out within 24 hours of the start of an event.

News releases and advisories answer the following questions in the following order:

#### **Who? What? When? Where? How? Why?**

Take a look at the media advisory and news release templates included in this chapter. Highlighted areas indicate spots where you can insert your event's information.

## MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATE

### EVENT NAME

One sentence synopsis of what your event will do or who it serves

Initially, you may not have a logo. Later, you can place one here. Until you have one, leave this area blank.

**WHO:** Who is holding this event and what that organization does

**WHAT:** Your event's name or purpose, for example: "Public Forum on the Need for Internet Access in Desha County"

**WHO ATTENDS:** What kind of people should come, for example "community members" or "leaders and volunteers with local nonprofits"

**WHEN:** Days of Week, Month Day, Year, Time a.m. to Time p.m.

### WHERE:

- Location's Name
- Location's Address
- Location's Phone Number

**KEY SPEAKERS:** Speaker's Name, Group Speaker is Representing

*This section also can be called "Agenda" rather than "Key Speakers" and the topics for the meeting would be bulleted out here.*

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Why is this important? Briefly explain the importance of this meeting to the local community.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Who should the media contact for more information? You need to include:

- Media's Contact's Name
- Media Contact's E-mail Address
- Media Contact's Phone Number

### ABOUT (Your organization's Name)

This area should contain basic, critical information about your organization – almost like a "Quick Facts" section, but in narrative form. The first sentence of should include the name of your organization and your organization's mission or purpose. The second sentence should cover who you serve, where you operate geographically and when you got started. Your last sentence should include your physical address, if possible, your website, phone number, e-mail or other contact information.

###

(The ### symbol is a news-writing device that signals to a media person that you are through providing them with information. It should be the last thing included.)

## PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: PR Volunteer's Name  
PR Volunteer's Phone  
PR Volunteer's E-mail

**TITLE of RELEASE, WHICH INCLUDES AN ACTIVE VERB  
AND USUALLY THE NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATIONS**

*Subtitle of Release, usually a phrase with additional details*

CITY, STATE (Month Day, Year) – your first sentence indicates who the release is about, what happened and when it happened. Your second sentence indicates where it happened, how it happened and why it happened.

“Often, your second paragraph is a quote from the head of your organization or the head of the organization that you’ve helped,” said Name, Title of Organization. “Quotes are a great way to incorporate non-factual statements and opinions, which can’t be stated in the rest of the press release because it should be a facts-only document.”

The remainder of your paragraphs should contain more detail. It should first start with who and move on to the rest of the information, such as:

- Who is sending out the release and who else is the release about?
- What happened at the event or what was discovered? This needs to be a news-worthy item of interest to your local community.
- When did this happen? Was the timing significant in any way?
- Where did this happen? Is the location significant in any way?
- How did this happen? Who all was involved, how did this come about, how long did it take to plan it, etc.
- Why did this happen? What is the significance of this event or release?

Although complete sentences are preferred, it is okay to bullet out information in a release. Just remember to start with the brief facts in the first paragraph and then go into greater detail later.

### **ABOUT (Your organization's Name)**

This area should contain basic, critical information about your organization – almost like a “Quick Facts” section, but in narrative form. The first sentence of should include the name of your organization and your organization’s mission or purpose. The second sentence should cover who you serve, where you operate geographically and when you got started. Your last sentence should include your physical address, if possible, your Web site, phone number, e-mail or other contact information.

###

(The ### symbol is a news-writing device that signals to a media person that you are through providing them with information. It should be the last thing included.)

## Radio Public Service Announcement

Public Service Announcements (PSA's) can be created three different ways:

- a deejay reads the announcement on-air,
- a member of your organization goes to the station to record an announcement which will be played on-air,
- or your organization tapes an announcement and provides it to the radio station for on-air play.

PSA's should be 10-30 seconds in length. They should grab people's attention and they should suggest a specific action, such as calling a number for more information or attending an event on a certain day. The station will need to know the:

- Date, day of week and time
- Location
- Reason people should attend
- Gathering is to create job growth in our community and to promote technology and economic growth in our County.

### **Sample Public Service Announcement**

*Let's make Walker's Mill better together! Join us Friday, May 14, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Roland Avenue Senior Center. All are welcome to share ideas on jobs, the internet, and community growth. Together, we can make it happen!*

## Logo and Tagline

A logo is graphical depiction of your e-Community effort, such as the bulls-eye used by Target. Here is the general logo Connect Arkansas uses for its efforts in North Carolina:



A tagline is phrase or sentence typifying your organization or initiative. Connect Arkansas' tagline is: "Our Path to the Future." Other examples include GE's former tagline "We Bring Good Things to Life" and its current tagline "Imagination at Work."

## Fact Sheet

A fact sheet is a simple, one-page document listing basic information about your effort. Usually, it presents information regarding who created the organization, who the organization serves, what the organization does, when it was started, where it operates, how to operate, why it operates, how to contact the organization, and where people can find more information.

## Print Materials

Print materials include stationary or letterhead, newsletters and brochures.

## **Paid Advertising**

Paid advertising tactics include the placement of ads in the newspaper, on the radio, on television, and on the internet. They also include billboards and banner placement.

The opposite of paid advertising is unpaid advertising, also referred to as public service announcements (PSA's). PSA's can be placed on television and in periodicals as well.

## **Grassroots Marketing**

Grassroots marketing involves hands-on work without an intermediary. For instance, with a newspaper ad, your intermediary is the newspaper. In grassroots marketing, you would bypass the newspaper all together and go speak to the target audience on your own.

An e-community effort uses many grassroots marketing techniques. Tactics for grassroots marketing include speakers' bureaus, PowerPoint presentations, flyers, hand-outs, hand shakes, and appearances at community festivals and events.

## **Viral Marketing**

Most effectively carried out through computers and the internet, viral marketing involves sharing your story or product with an individual, who tells a friend, who tells two friends, who then tells another friend. Viral marketing tactics can be as simple as placing a notice at the bottom of an e-mail that says, *"for more information about the internet, contact the Desha Forward Steering Committee at [www.deshafoward.org](http://www.deshafoward.org)."*

## **Website and Online Presence**

As a driver of technology-based economic development in your region, you need to have a functional Web site, which is kept up-to-date. Sections of your website might include:

- About Us
- Steering Committee Members
- Technology-based Economic Development
- Connectivity in Our Area
- Public Meetings and Minutes
- Initiatives
- Contact Us

Creating a website is the first step in establishing an online presence. It also helps to link your website to other websites, including those that are in your region (such as your chamber of commerce, county resources site, and local paper). You also could look into online advertising and partnerships.

## **Fundraising Materials**

Fundraising materials include letters of support from community entities that attest to their faith in your endeavor, success stories in which you feature individuals who have benefited from increased access, and sponsorship and donation sheets that detail different levels of giving.

## Direct Mail

Direct mail can be postcard, letter, newsletter or packet. It is an appeal mailed directly to an individual's home or place of business that requests their involvement or patronage. A great response rate for direct mail is two percent – so if you send to 1000 people and 50 respond, do not be discouraged; you actually have had a successful direct mail campaign by industry standards.

## Databases

You already started a database of e-Community stakeholders and volunteers. Add a database of media in your region, community groups to speak to, places to distribute your e-Community brochure to, and etcetera. By tracking these activities in a database, such as one created in Microsoft Excel, you increase your ability to locate and serve the various groups that make up your target audience.

## ListSers and Message Boards

Many commercial internet services offer *listserv* and message board opportunities. Message boards allow your e-Community Steering Committee to converse online in real time. You also could have a *Message Board* where the community could post comments or needs in real time. Remember to appoint a moderator. Sometimes, sentiment is not fully conveyed in e-mail. Having an even-handed person moderate the *Message Board* promotes civil conversation.

## Resources

Additional resources include:

- American Marketing Association, [www.ama.org](http://www.ama.org).
- *Direct Mail Pal: A Direct Mail Production Handbook* by Ken Boone, et. al, Galtpress, 2002.

## F. High-Speed Internet Access, or Broadband, Defined

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Generally speaking, internet access and what it is called is based on how quickly, or the speed, at which you can get your information from the internet.

**Dial-Up.** If you are accessing your internet by dialing in over the phone, then you have what is called dial-up internet access.

**High-speed internet.** *High-speed internet* is different from dial-up because it allows your computer to get and receive, or transfer, large amounts of data at significantly higher speeds than dial-up.<sup>4</sup> ***High-speed internet access is also commonly referred to as broadband.***

Although there is no industry or technically agreed upon definition of the transfer rate that constitutes broadband, for reporting purposes, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defines broadband as having the capability of supporting transfer rates of *200 kilobits per second (kbps) in at least one direction (upstream or downstream).*<sup>5,6,7</sup>

More commonly, the current standard for broadband is a two-way connection between 384 kilobits per second (kbps) to 25 megabits per second (Mbps).<sup>8</sup> The Connect Arkansas Broadband Act (Act 604), more closely aligns with the latter definition and defines 'broadband' as: "...any service used to provide internet access at a minimum of 384 kbps in either direction."<sup>9</sup>

Broadband includes several high-speed transmission technologies which are delivered through wired or wireless means. Wired broadband technologies include: Broadband over Powerlines (BPL), Cable Modem, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), and Fiber Optic Wire (Fiber). Wireless broadband technologies include: Fixed Wireless, Mobile Wireless, and Satellite.

### Deployed Technologies

#### WIRELINE TRANSMISSION TECHNOLOGIES

**Broadband over Powerlines (BPL).** BPL is an emerging technology that delivers broadband through existing low to medium voltage electric power lines. Currently, BPL is only available in limited areas, and has some potential, since power lines are installed virtually everywhere and would alleviate the need to build new broadband facilities to every customer. BPL speeds are comparable to DSL and cable modem speeds and can be provided to homes using existing electrical connections and outlets.

**Cable Modem.** Cable modem service enables the cable operators to provide broadband over the same coaxial cable lines that carry cable television. Often times, if cable television access exists, a special cable modem can be used to provide broadband internet services. Cable modem transmission speeds are comparable to DSL. Although transmission speeds vary depending on the type of cable modem, cable network, and traffic load, cable modems usually provide transmission speeds of 1.5 Mbps or more.

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<sup>4</sup> Federal Communications Commission: Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau. What is Broadband? Accessed on 12 July 2007. <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/broadband.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Upstream: A transmission from the consumer to provider

<sup>6</sup> Downstream: A transmission from the provider to the consumer

<sup>7</sup> Federal Communications Commission. FCC 99-5. Adopted 29 January 1999.

<sup>8</sup> California Public Utilities Commission Telecommunications Division. Connecting California: Broadband Report Update. 20 September, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Senator Capps. Act 604. State of Arkansas, 86<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, Regular Session, 2007. 28 March 2007.

**Digital Subscriber Line (DSL).** DSL uses traditional phone lines to deliver high-speed data communications. Two adapters on either end of the copper wire encode and interpret the signal and transmit the data through a special DSL modem. DSL transmission speeds range from several hundred Kbps to several Mbps. The availability and speed of the DSL service also depends on the distance from the home/business to the closest telephone company facility.<sup>10</sup>

**Fiber Optic Wire (Fiber).** Fiber optic (or fiber) connections transmit internet traffic using rays of light, providing users with the fastest broadband commercially available. A single strand of fiber, the thickness of a human hair, allows data transfers up to nearly 80 gigabits per second (Gbps), or more than 1 million times faster than dial-up. Telecommunications providers (mostly telephone companies) offer fiber broadband in limited areas. Variations of the technology run the fiber directly to the customer's home or business, to the curb outside, or to a location somewhere between the provider's facilities and the consumer.

## Wireless Transmission Technologies

At the municipal and global level, wireless broadband connects a home or business to the internet using a radio link between the customer's location and the service provider's facility. Wireless broadband is often used in remote or sparsely populated areas where DSL or cable modem service would be too costly to provide. The service is provided through the use of longer range directional equipment and an external antenna is required. Wireless broadband speeds are generally comparable to DSL and cable modem.

**Fixed Wireless.** Depending on the type of wireless technology that is deployed, wireless can provide broadband connections for a single computer, multiple computers, several neighborhoods, or even an entire city.

**Hot Spots** are public locations (i.e. airports, city parks, bookstores) that use a short-range technology to provide fixed wireless broadband service. Hot Spots can generally provide broadband service at speeds of up to 54 Mbps.

**Wi-Fi** (Wireless fidelity), one of the most common wireless technologies, can be used in conjunction with DSL or cable modem service to connect devices to the internet via a broadband connection. New laptops often have an internal antenna for Wi-Fi. Wi-Fi has distance capabilities from a few hundred feet to several thousand feet.

**WiMax** is another emerging wireless technology. It can transmit wireless signals as far as 30 miles. WiMax can generally provide broadband speeds of up to 300 Mbps.

**Mobile Wireless.** Wireless voice carriers are employing EV-DO (Evolution Data Optimized), a wireless broadband radio standard, to provide high-speed data services to their customers nationwide. These services require a special PC card with a built in antenna that plugs into a user's laptop computer and generally provides average speeds of 400-700 Kbps.

**Satellite.** Satellites bring broadband Internet connections to areas that would not otherwise have access. Satellite technology can deliver downstream speeds of about 500 Kbps and upload speeds of about 80 Kbps, though service can be disrupted in extreme weather conditions or obstructions in the line of sight to the orbiting satellite. These speeds are typically slower than DSL and cable modem, but the download speed is about 10 times faster than dial-up internet.

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<sup>10</sup> Federal Communications Commission: Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau. What is Broadband? Accessed on 12 July 2007. <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/broadband.html>.



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