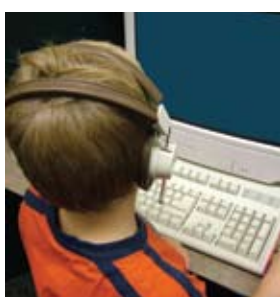
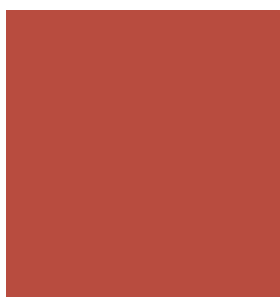
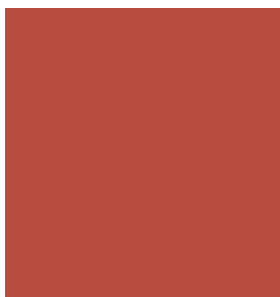
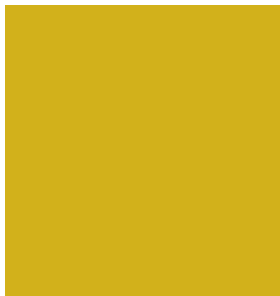


COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Empowering Communities in the Age of E-Government





Since 1999, the Department of Energy has worked with the National Urban Internet and others to create community capacity through technology.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY
Empowering Communities in the Age of E-Government

Table of Contents

Message from the Environmental Justice Program Manager	3
Introduction.	5
Partnerships.	5
Process Chart: From Agency to Community.	7
Case Studies.	8
Academic Achievement	8
Municipal Management.	8
Community Technology Centers	9
Capacity Building	10
Emergency Response	11
Future Activities	14
For Further Information	16



“Through our combined efforts, we have distributed nearly 3,000 computers to small towns and communities, and the numbers grow with each passing day.”

Melinda Downing



Message from... The Environmental Justice Program Manager

The Department of Energy (DOE) is committed to assisting small towns and communities in enhancing their technological capacity to participate in DOE programs. It is our belief that by providing these communities with computers, access to the Internet, and ongoing training and assistance, we can improve the level of public involvement in our programs, which in turn will lead to better decisions.

I still remember the day in 1999 when the National Urban Internet presented this concept to my office. At that time, we did not fully appreciate the extent of the digital divide in the country and, more particularly, in the small towns and communities near DOE facilities. After several discussions, we decided to examine the potential of providing information and conducting discussions online. I am glad that we did.

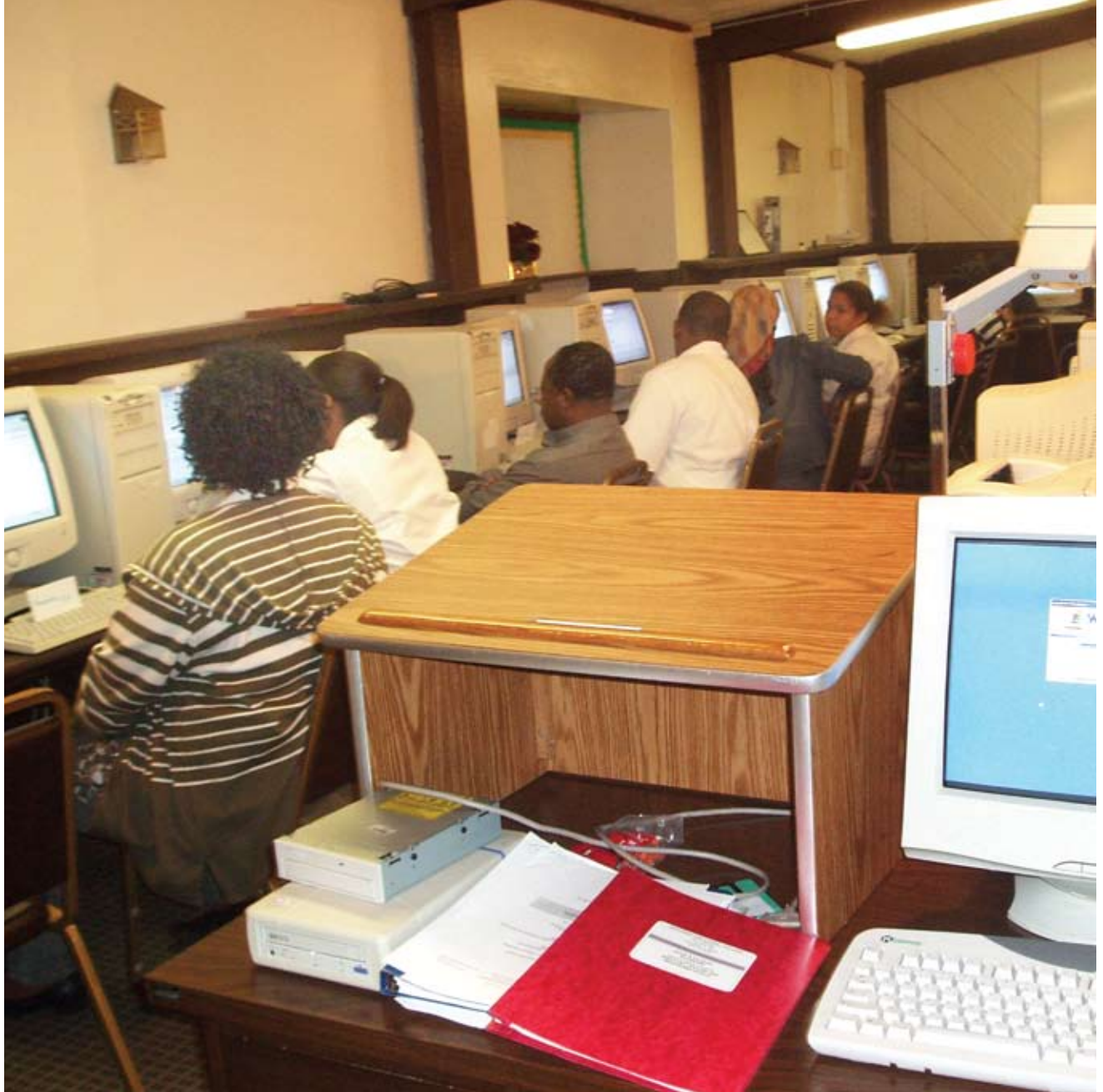
We have learned so much. The project has confirmed for us that the digital divide is real, even in the new millennium. There are numerous households and small towns without access to computers and high-speed Internet. There are many small towns that do not apply for Federal assistance because they lack the resources and staff to do so. Federal agencies are moving toward e-Government, where grants and funding opportunities are announced only online and applications will only be accepted online. For many small towns and communities, preparing online applications is not an option. Our work has demonstrated that we can help small towns and community groups increase academic achievement, improve municipal management, meet funding challenges, and achieve other goals by helping them acquire computers, access to the Internet, and training and technical assistance. Most recently, we have seen how these computers can help people obtain critical information and assistance in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

This project has also given us an opportunity to partner with other Federal agencies to meet a common goal. Through our combined efforts, we have distributed nearly 3,000 computers to small towns and communities, and the numbers grow with each passing day. Along with these computers, we have provided training and access to technical assistance. Slowly but surely, we are closing the digital divide.

It is my hope that, in the near future, all towns and communities, no matter how small, will be able to participate in Federal programs, and that none will be prohibited from applying for Federal programs because they lack the capacity to do so.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melinda Downing". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melinda Downing



The goal of capacity building through technology has been to provide disadvantaged communities with access to computers, the Internet, training, and technical assistance.



Introduction

Many small, low-income municipalities lack adequate resources to take advantage of the wealth of opportunities now available through the Internet. They lack basic technology, such as computers and access to the Internet. Many small town employees are unaware of the benefits of computers and the Internet to their daily operations because they are not computer literate. The cost of Internet services prohibits small, low wealth municipalities from connecting to the Internet, particularly using high-speed connections. Taken together, such small, low wealth municipalities operate at a severe disadvantage.

The technology challenges that plague these municipalities also plague limited resource farmers; small, rural school districts; and community-based organizations to the same degree.

Since 1999, the Department of Energy has worked with the National Urban Internet and others to create community capacity through technology. This project has involved providing computers, training, and technical assistance to municipalities, schools, and community groups across the country. This effort has now expanded to include the General Services Administration, the United States Department of Agriculture, Tennessee State University, DOE's Massie Chairs of Excellence, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Fairfax County, Virginia Office of Partnerships.

Expanding electronic government is one of the five key elements in the President's Management Agenda. The main goals outlined by the President are to improve information technology planning through the budget process and to champion citizen-centered electronic government. The result is expected to be major improvements in the Federal government's value to the citizen.

Small towns require assistance to gain access to computers, training, technical assistance, and connections to the Internet. Otherwise, efforts to improve the Federal government's value to these municipalities and their citizens through technology will fail. The value of a citizen-centered electronic government to citizens can be determined by the magnitude of citizens' access to their electronic government.

Partnerships

The Department of Energy and other Federal agencies are conducting several capacity building projects around the country. Some of these projects help host communities near DOE facilities participate in environmental management decisions that impact their neighborhoods. Other projects help community groups and limited resource farmers increase their individual and collective abilities to participate in energy, environmental and other decision-making activities at all levels. Still other projects help small towns, limited resource farmers and rural communities understand Federal programs and how to participate in those programs. Regardless of location or purpose, each project considered in this report helps the target population recognize the issues, understand the range of remedies, and select the solution that is in its best interest.

A key component of each project is computer technology. Each project employs technology to facilitate planning, resource development, communication, and project management. In some cases, the target population requires assistance obtaining computers and access to the Internet. Others require training and technical assistance. Each project includes online technical assistance to help community groups, small towns, and rural communities address energy, environmental, and economic development challenges. The guiding principle of

each project and its activities, is to build community capacity for environmental cleanup, waste management, and sustainable development in a manner that permits the local host community to grow and develop with little or no additional DOE assistance.

DOE initially started the capacity building through technology initiative in partnership with the National Urban Internet and Howard University Urban Environment Institute. The goal has been to provide disadvantaged communities with access to computers and the Internet. The partnership has expanded to include the following entities:

Dr. Samuel P. Massie Chairs of Excellence

(Massie Chairs) – The Massie Chairs develop community technology centers, install software and computers, network computers, conduct training classes, provide technical assistance, visit centers and conduct needs assessments, and participate in planning sessions, conferences, and workshops.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA):

Central Excess Property Office at the Beltsville Service Center

– This USDA office provides transportation for computers and other equipment donated by Federal agencies and other sources; stores computers and other equipment until ready for distribution across the country; troubleshoots, repairs, and prepares computers and other equipment for public schools; donates computers and other equipment; and participates in conferences and workshops to provide directions, guidance, and assistance.

National Office of Outreach – The Office of Outreach provides a strong link to limited resource farmers; provides strategy advice; participates in planning sessions, conferences, and workshops; and hosts conference calls and meetings.

Farm Service Agency – The agency provides financial support to transport computers to small towns and limited resource farmers, and participates in planning sessions, conferences, and workshops.

General Services Administration (GSA)

– GSA contributes excess computers and other equipment, and participates in planning sessions and workshops.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

– EPA contributes excess computers and other equipment; plans meetings; establishes relationships with other agencies; and participates in planning sessions, workshops and conferences.

National Defense University

– The college provides computers and other equipment, and participates in planning sessions, workshops, and conferences.

Fairfax County Office of Partnerships in Northern Virginia

– The office provides excess computers and other equipment, provides technical assistance with academic achievement activities, and participates in planning sessions, conferences, and workshops.

The Law Offices of Beveridge and Diamond, P.C.

– The firm provides strategic advice and hosts regular planning workshops.

From Agency to Community



Agency declares computer excess/surplus

.....

Agency contacts NUI



⋮

NUI selects jurisdiction to receive computers



.....



NUI picks up computers and stores them in warehouses

⋮



NUI transports computers to community-based organizations

.....

NUI and CBO upgrade/refurbish computers, add software, etc.



⋮

NUI, CBO and Tennessee State University install, network and provide training



.....



NUI and CBO distribute computers to schools, organizations, small towns, etc.

⋮



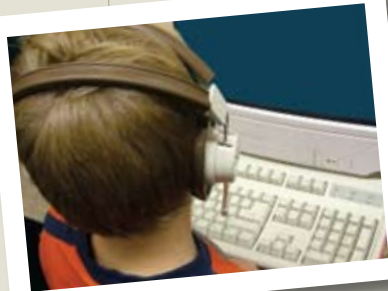
Computer ready for use in selected jurisdiction

NUI = National Urban Internet
CBO = Community-based organization

CASE STUDIES

Academic Achievement - Fairfax County Computer Learning Centers

The Computer Learning Centers Partnership (CLCP) is a collaboration of businesses, government, schools, and community-based organizations. It provides high-tech resources, including technology training and classes, for children and their families who would otherwise not have access to current technology. By developing computer centers in housing developments, community centers, churches, and public schools throughout Fairfax County in Northern Virginia, hundreds of children are afforded similar access to technology as children who have computers in their homes.



The county provides the location, administrative costs, and a dedicated staff. The business sector provides funding for state-of-the-art computers, equipment, software, and Internet access.

Businesses also provide employee release time and volunteers who tutor students and help maintain equipment, as well as internships and job skills training. The result is improved school attendance, increased academic achievement and self-esteem, and greater opportunities for higher education and employment.

In the early days of the partnership, the National Urban Internet, a CLCP partner, provided excess and surplus computers for the initial center. That contribution allowed the CLCP to start the TECH CLUB —“Take Earned Computers Home.” Since that time, CLCP and the Office of Partnerships have collaborated with the Department of Energy and other Federal agencies to promote technology to defeat the digital divide through conferences, workshops, and direct assistance to low-income and minority communities across the country. The CLCP is dedicated to its mission to “Close the Technology Gap.”

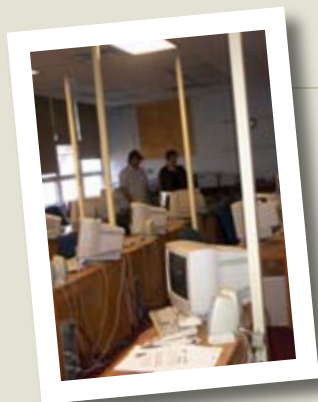
Students who attend one of the CLCP centers discover a variety of resources and activities:

- Use of state-of-the-art computers, software, and printers
- Training in computer and software use by qualified instructors and volunteers
- Access to the Internet
- An environment in which to complete homework assignments with assistance from volunteers and peers
- The opportunity to be a member of the TECH CLUB and use donated computers in their homes
- Participation in educational and enrichment activities such as building computers, designing web pages, television and video production, computer graphics, art programs, and field trips.

Municipal Management - Prichard, Alabama

“We always suspected we were doing a good job. Now we know.” The thing that gives Prichard’s mayor such confidence is something the Federal government outgrew some years ago—excess and surplus computers. Due to a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Energy and Howard University, Prichard, Alabama initially received six computers and is still counting. “Once we got the word out about DOE’s computer donation, computers started coming out of the woodwork. I told the DOE story to top executives at Alabama Power, and they’ve donated 30 computers to Alabama mayors all over the state.”

Roughly 35,000 people live in Prichard, Alabama, and more than 40 percent of these people have incomes that are below the poverty line. In close proximity to Gulf Coast beaches, state parks, and other tourist attractions, Prichard should benefit from the tourist industry. However, while tourism provides much of southern Alabama’s income, Prichard does not share in the wealth.



Prichard suffers from widespread dilapidated housing, high unemployment and underemployment, flooding, and poor sanitation drainage systems. City officials attribute Prichard's economic woes in large measure to

reindustrialization and economic migration during the past 30 years. Additionally, while Alabama paper mills are located just outside Prichard's city limits, the smells and air pollution from the mills spread into the city. Prichard receives no tax revenues from the mills, yet suffers the "downstream" effects of air pollution and its consequent health and aesthetic impacts. DOE was interested in this small Alabama town for the very reason tourists and industry are not - the environmental injustices it is experiencing.

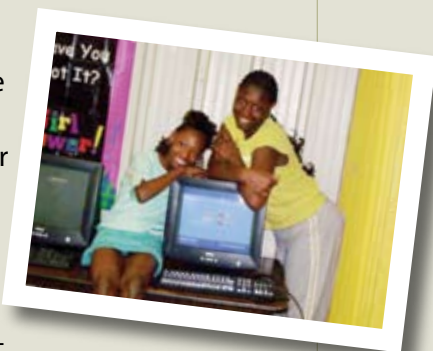
These environmental issues have, over time, helped to create a city rich in commitment yet poor in resources. Before the DOE donation, Prichard's City Planning Department had only two computers and one printer. The Department of Community Affairs had a vintage 1968 typewriter on which it hammered out the National Brownfields Showcase Proposal. This proposal gives aid to Brownfields sites that were once home to industries such as dry cleaners, factories, or body shops but are now in need of cleaning before undergoing redevelopment. Some years ago, a ballpark assessment of Prichard's computer needs suggested the city should acquire at least 30 computers to be fully functional.

To get the ball rolling, DOE delivered six computers to Prichard and they were installed in key city offices in an effort to connect Prichard's resources. The computers have allowed the city to network its services, respond to public concerns, and complete and implement a geographic information system. The Mayor's office received two computers; the Office of Public Works received two; and the Environmental Inspections building and the Brownfields site

golf course received one each. Now the workload is simple enough for Prichard to generate daily reports on a database to tell who's constantly contacting city offices and how they're getting help. "We're able to do a heck of a lot more than we were ever able to do before—and get it done in less time," said the Mayor.

Community Technology Centers - Augusta, Georgia

Augusta, Georgia is near DOE's Savannah River Site, which is located in Aiken, South Carolina. Several years ago, DOE and EPA collaborated to build community capacity for environmental decision-making in Augusta by creating a community technology center. Howard University Urban Environment Institute and Paine College provided technical assistance. Once the center was in operation, Howard University, EPA, and DOE provided training sessions that included basic computer operations, geographic information systems (GIS), risk assessment, risk management, and other subjects, such as grants research and proposal writing.



During one of the environmental training sessions at the Augusta community technology center, the community decided to apply for an EPA Brownfields Pilot grant. Community residents took the lead and drafted the basic Brownfields application and posted it on their website for public review and comment. Through an agreement with the mayor, the City submitted the application to EPA for consideration. EPA selected the proposal and provided a \$200,000 assessment grant to the City. Charles Utley, director of the community technology center, is the chair of the Augusta Brownfields Commission and leads the effort to assess, clean, and redevelop Augusta's Brownfield sites.

CASE STUDIES

Since 1999, the Augusta Brownfields Commission has registered many successes. First, it conducted an assessment of a 10-acre contaminated site. Second, it secured an \$8,000,000 state grant to clean the site. Third, it cleaned the site of all environmental contamination. Finally, it has secured another EPA grant to assess additional sites and develop a revitalization plan for the initial site cleaned through the Brownfields strategy.

The Commission is currently seeking a new use or uses for the 10-acre site that will produce revenues for the community without generating waste. It is also developing a plan to address all Brownfield sites in Augusta. All of the Augusta Brownfields revitalization results are direct products of the community technology center and the DOE community capacity building effort.

Capacity Building - Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Scarboro is a small environmental justice community near DOE's Oak Ridge Reservation site in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. For years this small community has complained about environmental and racial discrimination from all sources.

To improve relations between the Scarboro community, DOE and DOE's Oak Ridge Office (ORO),

DOE held a series of discussions in the Scarboro community. The original participants in these discussions included DOE, ORO, EPA, Tennessee State University's (TSU) Massie Chair, and the City of Oak Ridge. Based on these discussions, the Scarboro community received the following:

- Two trailers provided by ORO. ORO covered the cost of disassembly, transportation, re-assembly, set-up, and utility installation
- Excess computers from DOE

- Technical assistance from DOE and TSU's Massie Chair
- Training classes from TSU
- Upgraded equipment
- Internet access.

The Scarboro Community Environmental Justice Council, Inc. (SCEJC), a non-profit corporation, supports and manages the Scarboro Community Technical Center in conjunction with Mount Zion Baptist Church. The Center offers classes for community residents. DOE and the Massie Chairs will conduct additional training for Scarboro community residents. All of the training supports DOE's efforts to improve relationships with a segment of a host community that has felt neglected and abused for decades.



DOE is interested in maintaining excellent relationships with all segments of its host communities. The Scarboro technology center affords this community an opportunity to communicate with DOE officials and others on a regular basis. It also enables the community to receive assistance with technical matters from TSU and other Massie Chair institutions. The Massie Chairs are able to review technical and complex documents and provide explanations to a lay audience in lay terms. This assistance allows community residents to provide meaningful recommendations to ORO regarding waste management decisions.





Emergency Response – Coping with Katrina

On November 17, 2005, the National Small Town Alliance conducted a

lunch discussion to examine the ways Hurricanes Katrina and Rita impacted environmental justice and economic development efforts in small towns in the southeast. Small town mayors and community representatives from Mississippi, Alabama, North Carolina, and Oklahoma joined Federal representatives from DOE, EPA, and USDA and academic institutions for the discussion. The mayors and other representatives gave accounts of inadequate responses from Federal agencies with response requirements. There were accounts of little or no communication, little or no directions, and a reluctance to accept local knowledge recommendations. One of the positives was that computers distributed in small towns through DOE's environmental justice project were placed in evacuee shelters. In some cases, the computers were the only ones available to the evacuees. The evacuees were able to use them to learn about their benefits and communicate with family and agencies.



"The Delta Foundation provides a range of support to small towns, limited resource farmers and community groups in the Mississippi Delta. After Hurricane Katrina hit the Mississippi coast, a number of evacuees were provided with temporary shelter in small towns in the Mississippi Delta. The Delta Foundation is pleased that we were able to provide the temporary shelters with computers made available through the Department of Energy and the National Small Town Alliance. With these computers and Internet connections, the evacuees were able to locate and communicate electronically with friends and relatives who were spread out across the country, and seek and apply for resources available through the Federal government, State of Mississippi and other sources. Without the computers, life for the evacuees would have been stressed to a greater degree." **Cindy Ayers, President, Delta Foundation, Greenville, Mississippi**

"In addition to the computers that are now available to our students and others in the community, Southern Community College was able to provide computers to the shelters that housed Hurricane Katrina evacuees. If we had not received the shipment of computers through the Department of Energy, we would not have been able to provide computers for the shelters. Your gift of computers provided a new ray of hope for so many who lost so much." **Lawrence F. Haygood, Jr., President, Southern Community College, Tuskegee, Alabama**

BENNIE G. THOMPSON
SECOND DISTRICT, MISSISSIPPI

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY
RANKING MEMBER

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2432 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2402
(202) 225-5876
(202) 225-5898: FAX

E-Mail: benniethompson@mail.house.gov
Home Page: <http://www.house.gov/thompson>

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2402

October 21, 2005

THE COMMISSION ON
CONGRESSIONAL MAILING
STANDARDS

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS
CONGRESSIONAL GAMING CAUCUS
CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS
CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUS
CONGRESSIONAL RURAL CAUCUS
HOUSE EDUCATION CAUCUS

Ms. Melinda Downing
U. S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Ms. Downing:

I am very pleased that your agency decided to include schools, small towns and community groups from the 2nd Congressional District of Mississippi in your agency's Community Capacity Building Project. Through your past efforts, we have been able to distribute more than 250 computers to schools, small towns and community groups in the State of Mississippi. For some of the recipients, these computers are the only ones accessible to these communities. I appreciate your continued inclusion of the 2nd Congressional District in your programs.

I am pleased that you decided to partner with the Delta Foundation, Inc., to provide computers for Hurricane Katrina shelters within my District. I am aware that the federal response to Hurricane Katrina relief has been inadequate in major markets. However, federal response has been non-existent in the smaller towns within the State of Mississippi. We all are familiar with images of evacuees standing in line at shelters for hours in order to have their basic needs met. Through your efforts, evacuees in some of the shelters within the 2nd Congressional District can look forward to having needs fulfilled.

I look forward to working with you and the Department of Energy in the future to distribute additional computers in the 2nd Congressional District. With your agency's help, we can utilize new tools to arm ourselves against the fight on poverty in some of the poorest counties within the State of Mississippi.

Sincerely,



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

BGT:zb

107 WEST MADISON STREET
P.O. Box 610
BOLTON, MS 38041
(601) 866-9003
(601) 866-9036: FAX
(800) 355-9003: IN ST.

508 HIGHWAY 82 WEST
GREENWOOD, MS 38930
(662) 455-9003
(662) 453-0118: FAX

910 COURTHOUSE LANE
GREENVILLE, MS 38701
(662) 335-9003
(662) 334-1304: FAX

3607 MEDGAR EVERS BOULEVARD
JACKSON, MS 39213
(601) 982-8582
(601) 982-8583: FAX

263 EAST MAIN STREET
F.O. Box 356
MARKS, MS 38646
(662) 326-9003
(662) 326-9003: FAX

MOUND BAYOU CITY HALL
P.O. Box 679
106 GREEN AVENUE, SUITE 106
MOUND BAYOU, MS 38762
(662) 741-8003
(662) 741-8002: FAX

JAMES E. CLYBURN
6TH DISTRICT, SOUTH CAROLINA

VICE CHAIR
HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

DEMOCRATIC STEERING COMMITTEE

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4006

December 8, 2005

COMMITTEE:
APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT
TRANSPORTATION, TREASURY
AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

www.house.gov/jclyburn/
E-mail: jclyburn@mail.house.gov

Ms. Melinda Downing
Environmental Justice Program Manager
United States Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Ms. Downing:

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the Environmental Justice Program for the donation of computers in my Congressional district. Over the past two years, through your efforts and with the funds of your Community Capacity Building Project, we have been able to distribute more than 250 computers to schools, non-profit organizations, and community groups in South Carolina. As you may know, many of my constituents live in rural and economically-depressed areas. For some of these recipients, these computers are the only ones that are accessible to them; therefore, I appreciate your willingness to assist them and their communities.

It is imperative that all of our communities have access to basic technology. One of my personal goals is to create a network of technological centers in targeted rural public schools and communities in South Carolina. By establishing these "hubs", we can provide our citizens with a firm technical foundation that will then segue into better education for our children, stronger economics for our small and rural towns, and greater expansion of our business investments. The work that you do with the Community Capacity Building Project has helped to make those goals possible for many South Carolinians.

I look forward to a continued relationship with you and with the Department of Energy as we strive to improve living conditions for the least of these among us.

With warmest regards, I remain

Sincerely,

James E. Clyburn
Member of Congress

MOC/AS

2135 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4006
(202) 225-3315
(202) 225-2313 FAX

1703 GERVAIS STREET
COLUMBIA, SC 29201
(803) 799-1100
(803) 799-9060 FAX

161 EAST EVANS STREET
FLORENCE, SC 29506
(843) 662-1212
(843) 662-6474 FAX

8833 OLD HIGHWAY 6
SANTEE, SC 29142
(803) 854-4700
(803) 854-4900 FAX

437 AMELIA STREET
ORANGEBURG, SC 29115
(803) 533-1000
1ST & 3RD MONDAYS

21 NORTH MAIN STREET
SUMTER, SC 29150
(803) 436-2500
2ND & 4TH MONDAYS

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Model Technology Centers

DOE can build community and municipal capacity through technology. Two examples are the activities conducted through the Fairfax County Office of Partnerships' Community Learning Centers and the Augusta Community Technology Center. These examples show that we can increase academic achievement and economic development through technology centers.

The Windows on the World Technology Center in Roper, North Carolina, discussed below, will serve as a model for this effort.

Windows on the World

Windows on the World (WOW) in Roper is an E-CDC—Electronic-Community Development Corporation. Its mission is to promote the development of technical, computer, and Internet-related enterprises. It is also a resource for preparing the Washington County labor force for employment and entrepreneurial opportunities related to e-business. It is a resource for small businesses, limited resource farmers, community development corporations, and others who wish to participate in world markets. It is also a resource for small, rural, incorporated communities with populations of less than 1000 in preparation for information technology related to e-government.

WOW believes that information technology can be a major tool for preparing poor, rural, and isolated communities for success in today's high-tech economy. Digital literacy can maximize opportunities in the job market and promote democracy and social equity. It can also impact regional, county, and local governments as it connects such communities to state and Federal resources, giving them access to the technical and financial assistance so critical to their growth and development.

WOW was established as a result of years of creative strategic planning and financing. For example, the U.S. Department of

Agriculture (USDA) provided funds for the building and the Central Excess Property Office at USDA's Beltsville Service Center provided computers and other equipment for the center. Without this financial and related support, the center would never have been established.

The technology center is open to the entire community. Students and adults have access to the computers and high-speed Internet for homework, research, e-mail, and other uses. The small business incubator provides office space, computers, Internet access, telephone services, and business planning assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs. Those interested in technology classes can select from a range of courses offered in person and through distance learning. The 100-seat amphitheater is equipped with teleconferencing capability and has conducted teleconferences on two separate occasions with the White House.

WOW is taking steps to become financially self-sustaining. First, the center is providing web development and hosting services on a fee basis to 29 small towns in North Carolina. It is helping those towns prepare and submit proposals for funding. For the successful proposals, the center will provide project management assistance.

Second, the center is conducting a computer recycling service to provide low-cost computers to students, small towns, limited resource farmers who lack computers at home, and in city hall. Computer recipients are required to cover the cost of transporting, troubleshooting, and loading software on the systems. Third, the center provides training classes on a fee basis. Finally, the center has formed partnerships with technology companies to provide a range of services. These include wireless high-speed broadband access for municipalities, businesses, and homes.

WOW is one way for small towns like Roper (population 600) to see the world and to be seen by the world. The center offers a range of possibilities. According to Mayor Sanders, "We are finding new opportunities and ways to serve through technology daily. We are working for the day when all of our citizens are technology-literate, our students have an equal opportunity with others for academic achievement, the small towns we serve have the capacity to create economic development stability, and the center reaches financial sustainability."

Furthering DOE's Commitment

The commitment of DOE to environmental justice is ongoing. The computer distribution project supports that commitment. DOE will work with all of its components, other Federal agencies and the private sector to:

- Continue the computer distribution process
- Help small towns, schools, and educational non-profits gain access to high speed Internet access
- Help small towns, schools, and educational non-profits develop an individual technology strategy
- Establish a series of technology centers to offer a variety of services to increase academic achievement, improve municipal management, enhance economic development, and become financially sustainable.

DOE continues to give community groups the tools they need to participate more effectively in environmental decision-making. When citizens are active in environmental decision-making, and have a working knowledge of the process and substance of an issue, they can better protect themselves and produce decisions that reduce conflict and protect resources. Environmental justice means that all people who are impacted by a decision have an opportunity to meaningfully participate in the process that concludes with an action. With more meaningful public involvement and opportunities for a dialogue among parties, affected communities and agencies will be able to make more just and cost-effective decisions. This project, Community Capacity Building Through Technology: Empowering Communities in the Age of E-Government, is another example of how DOE helps communities improve their decision-making ability.

COMPUTER DISTRIBUTIONS

The Department of Energy (DOE) developed a community capacity building project to provide small towns and other communities near DOE facilities access to computers and the Internet, technology training and technical assistance. By creating community technology centers and providing excess government computers, this project offers citizens the opportunity to communicate with Federal offices and conduct various projects electronically. During the life of this project, DOE and its collaborative partners have distributed nearly 3,000 excess and surplus government computers to small towns and other entities.

Initially this project was designed to aid small towns adjacent to DOE facilities. It was later expanded to include other Federal agencies and non-DOE communities.

Here is the distribution of computers by state:

Alabama **290**
Georgia **106**
Mississippi **1,240**
North Carolina **500**
Oklahoma **270**
South Carolina **260**
Texas **20**
Virginia **10**

For Additional Information

Melinda Downing
Environmental Justice Program Manager
U.S. Department of Energy

☎ 202-586-7703

📠 202-586-1540

✉ Melinda.Downing@hq.doe.gov

DOE Environmental Justice Web Site: http://www.lm.doe.gov/env_justice/index.htm



