Frequently Asked Questions and Answers About Community Networks

Why an Integrated Community Network?

An Integrated Community Network connects, to a degree rarely realized, people and organizations (health care, education, government and business) with economic, relationship-building and innovative results:

- fostering and facilitating exchanges of information between and among Community members, as well as between and among Community members and those located elsewhere in the nation and the world
- identifying opportunities to create new "economic linkages" based on Information Age products:
    - information that has not before been considered to be a marketable "product" for barter or sale within the Community and beyond
    - information that can be developed into a value-added product for specialized markets, or for use in marketing, research, or training
- leveraging scarce community resources for competitive advantage by:
    - optimizing the uses and users of each network element
    - allowing for a joint business plan/funding approach
    - avoiding or reducing costs to the Community, while improving services available within the Community, by selectively "importing" through the use of the Integrated Community Network expertise available from government, health care, and education centers, as will as businesses, located outside of the Community
- ·reducing dramatically through cost sharing the time frame for the Community to get on the Information Highway
- ·pooling the Community's best leadership skills for the strategic planning process for
- economic development and other Community priorities
- ·pooling the Community's best specialized skills for the design and implementation of the Integrated Community Network plan through the establishment of task forces comprised of Community members
- ·sustaining active, ongoing participation in the strategic and implementation processes by identifying and addressing the self-interests of individual participants, but in a way that optimizes the benefits for the Community as a whole
- ·exploiting the strategic asset of technology as an enabler for the Community's current and future economic development opportunities, rather than simply for the narrow purposes of individual Community members' technology needs
- ·reducing or eliminating, as appropriate, duplications in the isolated planning and budgeting

- processes of Community members that stand as barriers to the benefits of shared information and resources

- forging innovative interactive ties with education, health care and government institutions, as well as with businesses located remotely from the Community

- providing a strategic marketing tool with which to attract people and businesses to the Community

   - knowledge workers can thrive and also live a lifestyle of choice

   - organizations

      - have ready and cost-effective access to resources and linkages that enable them to conduct their businesses in the most competitive fashion

      - are able to compete effectively regardless of the Community's distance from markets and customers

      - are able to participate in the evolution of the Community's competitive strengths to ensure their own competition-driven needs are met

What is a Community Alliance Initiative?

A Community Alliance Initiative is a community's means of acquiring a competitive edge in the push for economic development and job creation. Through a process developed by Northern Telecom, a local community group can facilitate an ongoing strategic planning and implementation process that involves the entire Community in the development of a multi-functional Integrated Community Network ("ICN") linking all Community constituents in virtually an unlimited number of ways. ICN provides the foundation for the creation of new community economic linkages and jobs, and for improved quality of life for the Community's citizens.

What are the drivers behind a Community Alliance?

- ·The Community's priority of economic development

   - creation and retention of jobs/attraction of new residents

   - retention and expansion of existing businesses

   - attraction of new businesses

- The Community's recognition of technology as a strategic asset for economic development

- Limitations on the Community's financial and human resources

- The necessity of competing on a global level in the Information Age

- The community's interest in its long term growth and prosperity

What are some of the unique elements of a Community Alliance Initiative?

- Utilization of an issues-driven approach, which identifies and validates the Community's social, economic and cultural issues, objectives, and concerns

- Maximization of integration and utilization of Community resources
- Contemplation of a shared business case/funding model, bringing together Community members who would otherwise each have full funding and justification responsibilities
- Identification of new sources of revenue and cost reductions by examining, as an interrelated whole, all resources and needs of the Community
- Participation by all Community leaders (i. e., those in a position to steer the direction of government and business and to control or influence umbrella budgets
- Representation of all Community constituents
- Focus on the alignment of a community networking strategy with the Community Vision