Latest News on the National E-Commerce Demonstration Project
There are some exciting efforts underway that will strengthen and expand the e-commerce efforts of the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC). For one, the Center has established an e-commerce advisory committee whose main purpose will be to design the e-commerce competitive grants program being launched by the Center in early 2005. The committee, composed of two Extension educators from each of the four regions of the country, will be responsible for evaluating proposals submitted as part of the competitive grants program. The inaugural meeting of the advisory committee is slated for mid-November in Kansas City, MO.

Secondly, the SRDC has continued its strong working relationship with Mike Woods, Extension Economist at Oklahoma State University. As a Senior Fellow of the SRDC, Mike will help coordinate the work of the e-commerce advisory board. Furthermore, he will oversee the peer review of current e-commerce educational curricula deemed by the e-commerce advisory committee to be of high quality. The hope is that with the approval of the curriculum authors, the SRDC will translate these products for inclusion in the web-based Extension curriculum project now underway in the Southern region. Once completed, these web-based e-commerce products will be made available to land-grant universities across the U.S. for use in supporting their e-commerce outreach activities.

Thirdly, plans are well underway for the hosting of the e-commerce/rural business development training to be held in May 2005 in Oklahoma City. This week-long training will incorporate some of the e-commerce elements that were offered in the Four Corners Region workshop held earlier this year (and coordinated by Bob Coppedge at New Mexico State University), as well as other innovative e-commerce products. If you are interested in being alerted to this training opportunity next May, please feel free to contact our office. Lastly, as always, we invite you to check out our e-commerce library and to inform us of any important e-commerce products that should be added to the library.

Lionel J. "Bo" Beaulieu
Director

News and Research:

Mississippi Rural Business E-Commerce Project
Beth Duncan of Mississippi State University is developing e-commerce educational programs to target small businesses in rural areas of Mississippi. More than 400 small businesses have completed the intensive one-day workshop.
"Electronic Retailing: Selling on the Internet" (PDF)
Symantec Report: E-Comm Attacks on Rise
By Ellen Messmer
Source: Network World Fusion, September 27, 2004
Symantec, a leader in network security solutions, reports an increased risk to e-commerce sites. During the first six months of 2004, these sites were the most targeted by Internet hackers. The report also reviews threats from major computer viruses.

Survey: Electronic Payments on the Rise
By Ann Bednarz
Source: Network World Fusion, August 13, 2004
Moving from paper checks to electronic payments appears to be an inevitable trend in business-to-business commerce. However, 80-percent of this year's transactions will still be done the old-fashioned way, according to this survey.

Retail E-Commerce Sales in Second Quarter 2004
Source: United States Department of Commerce & United States Census Bureau
Retail e-commerce sales are booming and have seen steady climbs over the last four years, despite a soft economy, according to this study conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Commerce. Also, e-commerce sales have seen fairly even growth as a percentage of total retail sales in the nation.
http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/current.html

Analyst Firm Predicts E-Commerce Upswing
By Ann Bernarz
Source: Network World Fusion, August 27, 2004
More people are accepting the possibilities and security of buying online, resulting in above-average growth over the next six years, according to this study.

Getting Rural Virginia Connected: A TOP Grant Funded Project
Read about this project to improve economic conditions in several under-served Virginia communities funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Technology Opportunities Program. A major goal included establishing broad Internet-based marketing programs for the selected towns and businesses.
http://top.bev.net/index.php

E-Commerce Successes:

Online Order Fulfillment, Hot Off the Grill
By James Maguire
Source: ECommerce-Guide.com, September 24, 2004
A look a Texas native's move toward electronic commerce will shed some light this process and its benefits. Mike Kastens explains the success of personalized branding irons for the grill!
The Net Difference Can Be Crucial
By Gladys Edmunds
Source: USA Today.com, October 6, 2004
Serving a specific need for a particular market is known as finding a niche. This article describes how a business owner made clever moves in advertising to her niche market and moved her business from selling six items per year to 1,600 items per year.


E-Library Focus:

Small Business Development Center: E-Commerce Guide
One of the latest additions to our E-Library, this website from the University of Texas-San Antonio provides a wide array of information, from an e-commerce tutorial to creating a business plan to finding a good web developer. There are many tips and tricks to help businesses start out in the right direction.

http://sbdcnet.utsa.edu/SBIC/e-com.htm

Helpful Tools and Resources:

Selling Internationally: A Guide for Business
Since businesses are putting their products on the World Wide Web, they have the ability to sell to people worldwide! This consumer alert from the U.S. Federal Trade Commission explains the basics of international trade. There is also a checklist to see if a business is ready for global commerce.

http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/alerts/ecombalrt.htm

E-Commerce Info Center
This site is another collection of links to information on e-commerce. It contains information on taxation, shipping, legal issues, accounting and methods of payment, as well as more information on establishing a website domain name. There is also a section on global commerce.

http://www.ecominfocenter.com/home.php

E-Commerce Law Resources
There are many laws pertaining to e-commerce in the global setting, and business owners need to be aware of them. This site is maintained by the Baker and McKenzie law firm and gives insight into privacy and data protection, U.S. and international taxes, as well as a free weekly e-mail newsletter.

http://www.bakernet.com/ecommerce/home.htm

E-Mail Marketing 101
This is a free 22-minute online presentation on e-mail marketing. Among other things, it demonstrates how to build a legal e-mail list, avoid common mistakes and plan an effective marketing campaign.

http://webinar.roving.com/email101/
**50 Tips to Maximize E-mail Marketing Success**
Learn how to use a permission-based e-mail marketing campaign to boost your sales, generate leads, increase website traffic and build a brand’s name recognition. To be effective, consumers must actually read the e-mail, not automatically delete it! http://library.gotmarketing.com/bd-documents/documents/50_Tips_911IU.pdf

*eNews is a bimonthly electronic newsletter produced by the [Southern Rural Development Center](http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/enews/)*