

eNews Archive

March 2006, No. 10

We noted in our last issue of eNews that a new set of projects was funded as a result of our e-commerce competitive grants program. We are pleased to share with you a brief abstract of what they two important efforts are all about. Both focus of the two grants are highlighted in the [News and Research](#) section below.

We are pleased that the five projects funded last year are well on their way to completion. In the months ahead, we will be working to review and refine products and make them available to you via our e-commerce website. We are anxious to share these new resources with you in the coming months.

As part of our continuing effort to deliver educational training on e-commerce related topics, the SRDC has invested in an important workshop being sponsored by the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development located at Penn State University. The Center will be hosting the "Connecting Rural Communities" Workshop on June 6-7 (see below for more information). While the participants are likely to be drawn from the Northeast region, the workshop is actually open to Extension educators and others across the whole U.S. We are proud to say that the curricula being showcased in this workshop is the product of one of the e-commerce competitive grants awarded last year to a team of Penn State and University of Minnesota Extension faculty.

We hope eNews continues to offer valuable information to you about e-commerce-related activities, and we urge you to notify us of any reports, programs or curricula that you believe may prove useful to the eNews readership.

Bo Beaulieu
Director

News and Research:

2006 Rural E-Commerce Grants Recipients Announced!

Two proposals have been selected as funding recipients of the Southern Rural Development Center's 2006 Rural E-Commerce Extension Initiative Grants Program. Take a look at who received the awards and read their abstracts detailing the future of e-commerce by clicking [HERE](#).

Connecting Rural Communities Workshop To Be Held June 6 – 7- 2006

With support from the Rural E-Commerce Extension Initiative, the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development is hosting a two-day workshop to provide Extension educators in all program areas with an in-depth understanding about how technology is impacting rural communities. This exciting hands-on program will feature Extension technology experts from throughout the nation. Participants will gain the background

and tools they need to help community leaders identify, develop, and implement sustainable projects that will improve their community's ability to participate in the global economy.

<http://www.nercrd.psu.edu /ConnectingCommunities/ConnectingCommunities.html>

U.S. Census Bureau Announces Fourth Quarter 2005 Retail Sales Stats

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced February 14 th that the estimate of U.S. retail e-commerce sales for the fourth quarter of 2005 was \$22.9 billion, an increase of 3.3 percent from the third quarter of 2005. Total retail sales for the fourth quarter of 2005 were estimated at \$960.3 billion, an increase of 0.3 percent from the third quarter of 2005. The fourth quarter 2005 e-commerce estimate increased 23.0 percent from the fourth quarter of 2004 while total retail sales increased 6.0 percent in the same period. See more at <http://www.census.gov/eos/www/ebusiness614.htm> .

Digital Divide Separates Rural, Urban Internet Users

by Gene J. Koprowski, TechNews World

Access to high-speed Internet can differ substantially between urban and rural dwellers, according to a new report by the Center for Rural Policy and Development. The center, based in St. Peter, Minn., says people in rural areas have a harder time getting broadband access at competitive and reasonable prices. The study shows, for example, that about 44 percent of homes in the Twin Cities area have high-speed Internet. That compares with just over 27 percent in rural Minnesota. The center interviewed nearly 1,500 Minnesotans in October and November 2005 and published the study in January.

<http://www.technewsworld.com/story/48190.html>

New Report Shows The Internet Builds Social Capital

Pew Internet & American Life Project

Social capital can be strengthened rather than weakened as a result of the Internet, states a new report by the Pew Internet & American Life Project. The January 2006 report, *The Strength of Internet Ties* , shows that, instead of disappearing, people's communities are transforming. Rather than conflicting with people's community ties, they found that the Internet fits seamlessly with in-person and phone encounters. Individual networks have expanded to include others who are geographically dispersed and these networks appear to be beneficial in helping Americans make important life decisions. http://www.pewtrusts.org/pdf/Pew_Internet_ties_012506.pdf

E-Commerce Successes:

Philip Drown Companies

Morris, Minnesota

By Jongeun Rhee

Savvy small business owners Philip Drown and his wife, Jeanette, use technology to overcome financial and location challenges. Since they founded their company in 1999, the Drowns have been constantly learning new concepts and exploring new frontiers in business by using the Internet. In addition to educational opportunities, PDC advertises on the web and uses the Internet extensively to offer services in project management, program evaluation, grant proposals, grant reporting, and business planning.

<http://www.accesse.info/CaseStudies/philipdrowncompaniesfiles/philipdrowncompanies.html>

E-Library Focus:

The Montana Manufacturing Center (Montana State University) offers a variety of e-commerce resources on its website. Online courses, resource links, and three downloadable e-business tool kits are available to educators and small business owners. The tool kits/assessments cover opportunities, readiness, and security issues. <http://www.mtmanufacturingcenter.com/eBusiness/knowledge.htm>

Helpful Tools and Resources:

Kentucky Business Leaders Launch Online Survey

A volunteer group of business leaders in Western Kentucky has formed a “think tank” and launched an online survey to gather information on entrepreneurship, enterprise development and innovation. They are calling on the expertise of the economic development community and others who have “gone before” to help them research and develop strategies for fostering entrepreneurship and innovation in Western Kentucky. A final report will be available. To participate in the survey, visit <http://www.zoomerang.com/recipient/survey.zgi?p=WEB22525ASEHP4>.

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eNews is a bimonthly electronic newsletter produced by the [Southern Rural Development Center](#)

