



**October 2008, No. 25**

## Welcome to the Latest Issue of eNews:

### **New e-Commerce Webinar Series to Broaden Web Perspectives**

The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative's fall installments of the e-Commerce 2008 Webinar Series are slated to open on **October 27, 2008**. Each new Webinar will provide an introduction and insights into the program content that will give educators, community leaders and citizens at large an overview of the learning possibilities offered. The dates and times currently scheduled are as follows:

October 27, 2008 2:00 p.m –3:00 p.m. CST

*Connecting Rural Communities: A Guide to Community Information Technology*

Presented by Rae Montgomery, Bill Shuffstall and Maxine A. Norman

November 11, 2008 2:00 p.m –3:00 p.m. CST

*Internet Strategies to Improve Farm Business Management*

Presented by Sarah Roth

Additional Webinar dates and release of new online curriculum will be announced soon! The next generation of modules tailored to e-Commerce success includes *Helping Artisans Reach Global Markets* and *Strengthening Competitive Advantage of Rural Businesses with e-Commerce and Experience Economy Strategies*.

For more information and instructions on joining these curricula Webinars, visit <http://srdc.msstate.edu>.

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### **New Grant Opportunity to Spark e-Commerce Education Growth**

The SRDC is excited to announce an opportunity for Extension educators to promote e-Commerce development by implementing one of the curriculum products that will be showcased as part of its e-Commerce 2008 Webinar Series launching this fall. Extension educators are invited to apply for mini – grants of \$3,000 to implement these curricula designed to serve as catalysts for e-Commerce growth. Successful grantees will provide training and leadership to implement one or more e-Commerce learning modules in single or multiple counties/parishes.

Each grantee will have the exciting task of employing cutting edge e-Commerce educational resources designed with rural services areas in mind. Additionally, grantees will be working closely with the staff of the Southern Rural Development Center to create initial program benchmarks and track long-term community impacts.

For more information about the RFP, an introductory Webinar will be conducted **October 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. CST** to introduce the full RFP and to discuss the application process.

To download the full RFP and find additional details, visit <http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce>.

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**Innovation:**

### [Bill Me Later Tops 1,000 Online Stores, Catalogs and Travel Partners](#)

Bill Me Later has announced that the number of online stores, catalogs and travel partners offering its payments approach has exceeded the 1,000 mark. According to the company, "The merchants in the network represent top-tier retail, airline and hotel brands offering tens of millions of products to Bill Me Later's rapidly expanding consumer base."

### [Yes, Even Small Companies Can Innovate](#)

By Marc Compeau

Coming up with new ways to boost sales or to slash costs doesn't have to mean investing millions of dollars in research or fancy computer systems. Innovation is about thinking hard about your company and how to improve it. Today. Now. But what if yours is a small business in a traditional niche like retail? My answer: So what? Mom and Pops can innovate. I know they can because I've seen it.

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### **e-Commerce Successes:**

#### [Cymax Stores: The Little Online Furniture Shop That Could](#)

By Jeff Meisner

When he could not find what he wanted to buy online, Arash Fasihi decided to start his own e-Commerce business to meet the demand. Things did not quite turn out as planned, but four years later, the Canadian entrepreneur's brainchild, Cymax Stores, is edging up on \$50 million in annual revenue.

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### **Sales and Service:**

#### [Five Steps to Best-in-Class Sales Performance](#)

By Andrew Boyd and Alex Jefferies

New technologies are enabling customers to find out more about your company -- and your competitors. This presents a new challenge for sales forces, which now have to interact with better-informed buyers. New Aberdeen research indicates five factors companies should focus on to improve their sales strategies.

#### [Online Shoppers in Search of Better Service](#)

By Kenneth Corbin

New study finds that as customer expectations rise, online businesses neglect user experience at their own peril. Online shopping is more popular than ever, but a new study has concluded that many e-Commerce sites provide a poor user experience, causing many customers to abandon their transactions and head to a competitor's site.

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### **Marketing News:**

#### [A Breakaway Opportunity for "Inferior" Products](#)

By Leslie Moeller, James Ryan, and Juan Carlos Webster

As the difficult economy causes consumers to trade down in their purchases, companies need to adjust their offerings to their customers' new behavior.

#### [Countdown to the Holidays: 100 Days to Ramp Up](#)

By Luc Vezina

If you start now, there are 100 days before we are in the thick of the holiday shopping season. It is just the right amount of time to ramp up your e-mail marketing efforts to make sure there are plenty of customers visiting your site.

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### **E-Library Focus:**

This library is a complete listing of online scams. While it is provided to us by the government of Western Australia, it is a detailed and comprehensive list useful to all.

[http://www.docep.wa.gov.au/ConsumerProtection/ScamNet/content/pages/full\\_list.html](http://www.docep.wa.gov.au/ConsumerProtection/ScamNet/content/pages/full_list.html)

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### **Online Security:**

#### **[BBB warns against new phishing attack](#)**

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) reports that a new phishing e-mail is now circulating on the Internet. The scam known as the "Wire Transfer Money" scam compromises the user's e-mail contacts.

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