



Tech companies, One Economy launch broadband program

Project's backers say broadband can bring educational and business opportunities to low-income areas

By Grant Gross, IDG News Service

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Nonprofit group One Economy has enlisted the help of tech companies to launch a campaign to bring broadband to 500,000 low-income U.S. residents by 2010.

[One Economy](#), a group focused on bringing technology to low-income communities, also hopes to enroll 5,000 young people in its Digital Connectors program, in which they will help their friends and neighbors with technology issues. One Economy's goal is to have those 5,000 young people provide 100,000 hours of community service by 2010.

Only about 21 percent of U.S. residents earning less than \$30,000 have broadband, according to One Economy. Broadband can bring educational and business opportunities to low-income areas, backers of the project said Tuesday.

Partners in the Bring IT Home America campaign include AT&T, the National Cable & Telecommunications Association, Intel, Symantec, and Verizon. In 2006, a One Economy campaign, also called Bring IT Home, persuaded 42 states to change finance policies to include broadband in new affordable housing.

In the new campaign, One Economy wants to create an Internet-based information channel that would bring "vital" programming and services to U.S. residents, One Economy said. Actor and director Robert Townsend announced his plans to work with One Economy and the Public Internet Channel to create online content for the channel.

The channel, announced in mid-2006, will include centralized access to a variety of localized services, including information on emergency services, finding jobs, social services, educational opportunities, and starting small businesses, Ramsey said then.

Several cities, including Los Angeles, Milwaukee, San Francisco, and Seattle, have signed on to the project.

"If we expect rural communities in West Virginia and other states to prosper in the global economy, broadband access is as important as water and sewer infrastructure," West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin said in a statement. One Economy and its partner programs can help do that, he added.