

Bringing IT Home

Lt. Gov. Skillman visits PHS on new Internet initiative

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Nine Indiana rural communities — including Peru — have been chosen to take part in a new state program to provide free, high-speed Internet service to selected households. But Peru will be the first of those nine to "Bring IT Home."

During a press conference Tuesday afternoon at Peru High School, Lt. Governor Becky Skillman announced the launch of Peru's "Bring IT Home" program to 50 families within city limits. Sponsored by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), AT&T and One Economy Corporation, the program is an effort to increase broadband usage and access to families financially unable to afford a computer or

Internet service. "Bring IT Home" is designed to bring these families the educational, economic and social opportunities the Internet provides.

"By increasing broadband access in our smaller cities and towns, we are enhancing the economic viability of our entire state," said Lt. Governor Skillman. "Governor Daniels and I are proud to support programs that allow our rural areas to build stronger economies ... As you know it's no longer a luxury to have high speed access. It's a necessity."

In addition to the free Internet access, AmericanTrust Federal Savings Bank has purchased a limited quantity of computers to offer to the participating families

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Tribune photo by Rob Edwards
Kathy Garretson, left, talks with Lt. Governor Becky Skillman on the new Internet access and computers that are being awarded to 50 families in the Peru area at Peru High School Tuesday afternoon.

Wednesday, July 9, 2008

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at a low cost and has also developed a mini-loan program for financing. One Economy Corporation is providing the low-cost computers in cooperation with national partners and the local Kmart is providing printers at a discount to complete the package.

Skillman added the program not only offers the families opportunities for improving education, but will train the youth to be Internet instructors for community seniors.

"Success starts in people's homes," said One Economy Project Director James Gore. "We all know what it's like to need assistance ... For children the impact is even stronger. When they have a better understanding, they will be able to teach others, improving their self-esteem and building tremendous leadership in the youth in your community."

Fifty Peru families were designated to participate in the two-year program by a selection subcommittee of the city's "Bring IT Home." Peru's "Bring IT Home" committee is comprised of at least one representative from the following: City of Peru, Miami County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA), Peru Community Schools, United Way of Miami County, Miami County Community Foundation, Peru/Miami County Chamber of Commerce, Miami County YMCA, Miami County Helping Hands and Peru Ministerial Association.

According to MCEDA Deputy Director Christy Householder, selection was based on income and proximity to the local AT&T on North Miami Street. Participating families must have AT&T service in their home or may qualify for a reduced rate through this program.

"The City of Peru is extremely grateful for this great opportunity," said Mayor Jim Walker. "For those receiving ("Bring IT Home") I wish you success. Education is the single most important tool in improving the foundation of our community and its success ... The City of Peru looks forward to working with AT&T, Lt. Governor Becky Skillman and the Peru Community School Corporation in bringing new technology into the homes of those who previously did not have access to the Internet."