

2009 NASCIO Recognition Award Application
Cross-Boundary Collaboration and Partnerships



West Virginia Office of Technology
Local E-Government Implementation & Adoption

West Virginia Office of Technology
Kyle Schafer, Chief Technology Officer
One Davis Square
Charleston, WV 25301
304.558.8100

THANKS TO E-GOVERNMENT IN WEST VIRGINIA PARTNERS

CLAUDE
WORTHINGTON
BENEDUM
FOUNDATION

west virginia



RESA
Regional Education
Service Agency



WVACO
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

WEST VIRGINIA
Department of
EDUCATION

B. Executive Summary

West Virginia is comprised of 55 counties with more than 230 municipalities. Due to the geographic and economic attributes of the state, local governments function on a very limited budget and do not have the resources (budget and personnel) to build or sustain a web presence. The E-Government Implementation & Adoption Program was conceived as a means to grow West Virginia's web presence through coordinated investment of public and private resources. In 2007, when this project started, less than 50% of county governments and less than 20% of city governments had an established web presence.

The West Virginia Office of Technology (WVOT), partnered with the West Virginia Municipal League, the West Virginia Association of Counties, the Community Connect Foundation, and the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE), began a process of creating a statewide portal for all city and county governments. Our goal was to implement and promote E-Government applications and seek ways to ensure participation from all local governments providing services to the citizens of West Virginia.

Through a collaborative effort, the WVOT and WVDE created a new curriculum for public high school students that combined civics education and technology training. This program got students out of the classroom and more actively engaged with local politics. Through this program, students interacted directly with their local government officials. The information collected through this process was ultimately used to build local government websites. Each participating high school was provided with the technology resources needed to capture the information collected during interviews with public officials and town hall meetings.

WVOT provided funding for hardware and software needed at the high schools, as well as web hosting services and project management. During Phase I of this project, six high schools were selected to begin the E-Government Implementation & Adoption Program. Due to the overwhelming success of the program at these targeted schools, the project has now expanded into a statewide initiative.

The mission of this partnership is to assist our county and municipal governments in developing and sustaining a local government web presence in order to keep our citizenry better informed. We will achieve this mission by leveraging our state's most valuable resource, our youth.

C. Description

In early 2007, the WVOT was asked to provide assistance in developing project plans for, what seemed to be at the time, three separate and very different initiatives.

The goals of these initiatives were:

- Work with counties and municipalities to increase their web presence. At that time, less than 50% of all West Virginia counties and less than 20% of all municipalities had a web presence. When questioned, counties and municipalities indicated the primary reason for not having a web presence was cost.
- Assist the Department of Education with the integration of new 21st Century Technical Skills into the classroom – specifically, develop a plan to integrate classroom technology with real life situations.
- Work with the Broadband Council to develop E-Government applications that will help promote broadband demand and keep our citizenry better informed.

The WVOT presented a single project plan to address all three initiatives. Specifically, the WVOT proposed the development of an E-Government Implementation & Adoption Program that would interject 21st century technology skills into the school's current civics curriculum. Schools were provided laptops loaded with Microsoft Office productivity tools, digital cameras and video recorders, and charged with working with elected officials to develop E-Government websites for their counties and municipalities at no cost to that government entity. This unique program was fully funded through grants from both the private and public sectors.

Six municipalities involving six high schools were covered by the initial grant. The new E-Government Implementation & Adoption Program curriculum was introduced into these schools in September 2007. Due to the widespread popularity of this program, grants were approved in April 2008 to broaden the program to include an additional 138 counties and municipalities. Grant dollars have already been appropriated to expand this program to all remaining high schools across the state and the remaining 124 counties and municipalities.

The concept of incorporating 21st century technology into school civics curriculum and adding value to local governments gained full support from the current administration.

“Developing partnerships among our schools and our government offices is a win-win for everyone involved. These partnerships are an excellent way to help our towns with limited resources develop websites that can serve

their citizens and reach out to the world. It's also a great learning tool for our students, who build their skills while finding creative ways to help us all. I can think of no better way to promote the best kept secret in America; West Virginia".

-Governor Joe Manchin III

The WVOT provided, at no cost, hosting services for all cities and counties participating in this program. WVOT is providing all server hardware, software support and maintenance for the project. High school civics students are supplied with the equipment and resources needed to engage in hands-on activities with local elected officials.

E-GOVERNMENT IN WEST VIRGINIA
Bringing information to "the People" via the internet

CITIZENS INTERACT WITH THEIR CITY AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS ONLINE

The Community Connect Foundation (CCF), the WV Department of Education, the Regional Education Service Agencies, the WV Association of County Officials, the WV Municipal League, and the WV Office of Technology have partnered to create county and municipality government websites branching from the WV GOV state portal website. This new portal allows citizens and local governments to interact more effectively.

The project, which will take several years to deploy statewide, was first launched as a pilot in six cities and their counties to allow a process to develop for smooth implementation and maintenance.

Already online, the WV GOV website helps citizens interact with local government agencies, such as city and county administrations. A total population of 1,57,376 citizens has already been impacted by the pilot project with another 1.6 million plus citizens in the remaining 49 counties.

Outreach meetings are being held throughout the state to discuss the project, ways to use websites and the state's portal. People who attend outreach meetings will learn about the efficiencies and cost savings associated with the deployment of government applications. As an incentive to participate the designated cities/counties will receive a license for Microsoft Office Professional software.

STUDENTS GAIN EXPERIENCE WITH LEADERSHIP AND WEB DEVELOPMENT

High school students will help shape the information that will be provided through the new state portal. High school students were very effective during the big work to gather data in each pilot area. School districts are developing lesson plans that will teach the students interviewing skills and techniques for collecting information, photos and video content for the website, along with how to design and update webpages.

Students participating in the agreement project have access to laptops, computers, digital and video cameras, and use of other tools that will assist them in accomplishing their task. Each school district will determine the level of course credit or community service student participants will earn. CCF purchases equipment suitable to meet the students' needs. Upon completion of the project, the equipment becomes school property.

Each participating city provides a liaison to work with the students. This person coordinates schedules for interviews and photo/video shoots, and coordinates the review and approval of appropriate officials. The initial new local government websites is to promote the city and county, provide information to the public, and provide basic citizen to government interaction tools.

Consents of all keeping the website information current are addressed by allowing cities choose to use the project as a vehicle to teach Content Standards and Objectives (C.S.O), Learning Skills, and technology tool Usage required by their curriculum. New students become responsible for updating the sites each year.

Electronic distribution of information and conducting transactions on the internet provide substantial cost savings to local governments. And citizens quickly see the benefits of 24/7 availability of online services. CCF is committed to helping elected officials and community leaders become familiar with and implement e-government applications.

For more information or to become a sponsor or partner contact the Community Connect Foundation at www.CommunityConnectFoundation.org.

COMMUNITY CONNECT FOUNDATION
116 Beech Grove
Martinsburg, WV 25401
Phone: (206) 765-0000
Fax: (206) 246-1174
www.CommunityConnectFoundation.org

The following equipment is being provided to the participating high schools:

- **Gateway Notebook PC**
Intel Pentium Dual Core T2330 1.6GHz, 802.11a/b/g Wireless, 2GB DDR2, 160GB HDD, DL DVDRW, 15.4" WXGA, Windows Vista Home Premium with MSOffice Pro 2007
- **JVC Video Camera**
35x optical/800x digital zoom ,2.7" widescreen color LCD monitor ,30GB hard drive and/or microSD/microSDHC media cards,Dolby Digital AC3 audio and built-in microphone,USB 2.0 connectivity Photo Navigator software
- **Canon PowerShot A470 Digital Camera**
7.1 Megapixel Resolution, 3.4x Optical Zoom Lens,2.5" LCD Display,w/2Gb SD sticks
- **Canon Deluxe 200 Tripod**
Panhead Type, 59.3 " max height, 21.7" min height with carrying case

- **Targus Blacktop Roller Notebook Case**
with a telescoping trolley handle and inline skate wheels
- **Video /Camera Accessory Bag**
- **Microsoft Office Professional**

The first six high schools started collecting content for their perspective counties and municipalities in September of 2007, with the first websites being completed in the fall of 2008.

D. Significance

This program would not have experienced the level of success it has achieved without the collaboration of many organizations. As with most cross boundary initiatives, the most significant hurdle was obtaining consensus from all the various stakeholders. In order to gain support and begin implementing the project plan, several steps had to be taken:

- WVOT approached the West Virginia State Board of Education to propose the curriculum additions – 21st Century Technical Skills into the pre-existing Civics program. The Board decided that the decision for curriculum modifications should be left up to each individual Regional Education Support Association (RESA). There are eight RESAs that support various geographic areas across the state.
- WVOT then submitted the project proposal and a presentation to the RESAs, and gained support for curriculum and technical requirements.
- WVOT presented project information to the West Virginia Municipal League and gained support for the project.
- WVOT presented project information to the West Virginia Association of Counties and gained support for the project.
- WVOT submitted a grant application to The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation and secured funding for the project.
- WVOT created Memorandums of Understanding for all organizations involved in the project.

With the success that we have experienced up to this point, we fully believe that every county and municipality across the state will have a sustainable web presence by the end of 2010.

west virginia State Agency Directory | Online Services Search This Site

Hillsboro, West Virginia

- About Us
- City Code
- Council and Board
- Meetings ▶
- Elected Officials
- Employment
- Events
- Lists ▶
- Press Releases
- Recreation
- Services
- Utilities

Did You Know?

Famous writer Pearl S. Buck was born in Hillsboro in 1892.



Welcome to Hillsboro, West Virginia

The town of Hillsboro is located in the Southern end of Pocahontas County, West Virginia and is the county's oldest incorporated town. Hillsboro was chartered in 1886. The town is named after Richard Hill of North Carolina; the name was later changed to Academy, but was soon restored to the original and current name.

Hillsboro is a historic location in Pocahontas County. It is not only the oldest incorporated town in the county, it is also home to famous author Pearl S. Buck. The original home of Pearl S. Buck is still standing today. Tours of this house are offered throughout the year.

Hillsboro is known as the center of the Little Levels. To help preserve the town's deep history, a festival known as the "Little Levels Heritage Fair" is held annually. More information about the festival can be found in the Events section of this website.

Hillsboro is nearby many different recreational activities. For more information on these activities, see the Recreation portion of this website.

[Contact Us](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Disclaimer](#)

WV.gov | USA.gov | Privacy, Security and Accessibility | © 2009 State of West Virginia

Students from Pocahontas High School created the website above for the City of Hillsboro at no cost to the city. No content is uploaded or changed on the site without the consent of the mayor. Each new class coming into Pocahontas High School will be responsible for continuing to enhance the site and maintain current content.

Since much more information is available, citizens from the Hillsboro community are much better informed than before. Much of the information is now available to them 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Citizens also play a role in the ongoing enhancement of the site by making their requests on-line.

Although counties, municipalities and citizens are seeing tremendous value in this program, students are the real winners. From an educational perspective, students from Pocahontas High School interview city officials and create content for this site. Before this project began, many students did not know their local government officials or were familiar with the services being provided by the local entity. By participating in the E-Government Implementation & Adoption Program, students enhanced their interview and presentation skills by conducting face-to-face interviews with local officials. They

also enhanced their technology skills by utilizing digital cameras, digital video recorders and various software tools to capture and digitize content and finally they gained first-hand experience in the political process.

E. Benefit of the Project

More and more, individuals are depending on technology to access accurate, timely and reliable government information. It is imperative that state, county and local governments recognize this shift, and strive to accommodate our citizenry. Although most of our elected officials recognize the need, many of the counties and municipalities in West Virginia did not have the financial or technical resources needed to accomplish this goal prior to the implementation of this program.

In the beginning we thought the primary beneficiary of this project would be our citizens, but as this initiative matured, we now see that the students involved in this program are receiving significant value. The students involved with this program have fully embraced the technology and through their own innovation have created some very remarkable websites. Last week First Lady Gayle Manchin, received a DVD from Nitro High School, which documented their website development project for the City of Nitro. She was so impressed by the accomplishments of these students that she presented the DVD to the West Virginia Jobs Cabinet. From this video, it is clear that our students have developed advanced technology skills that were used to solve real life issues. It is also apparent that they have learned a tremendous amount of information about our political process. These are all skills that will be transferable to all of their future endeavors.

This project has been particularly challenging and unique due to the sheer number of stakeholders, but none of these stakeholders would question the success of the final result. Students are now able to participate in their local governments and gain a better understanding of government and technology. Citizens of these communities are better informed. Elected officials are providing a service that is in high demand from their constituents. This project has truly been a Win, Win, Win for all.