

TIGER Mini Grant 6 Month Report

August 4, 2006

Project Title: Computer Course Development

Grantee: Wayne Public Library

Grant Award: \$1,680.00

Four classes have been developed and offered to the public twice each. Seven of the eight classes met. The classes are Basic Excel, Basic PowerPoint, Job Searching on the Internet and Basic Computer Strategies. The classes have made the library more visible in the business community. Many class participants came from businesses. Other participants were currently unemployed and looking to improve their skills. A few were self-employed or were investigating starting their own business. The project is now complete.

Project Title: Expanding Technology Horizons

Grantee: Hartington Public Library

Grant Award: \$2,119.00

Four computers were purchased to provide patrons with better access to information, greater continuing education opportunities, and technology expertise. The library's new computers have been utilized through daily library traffic and the technology classes that have been offered through partnerships with the University of Nebraska Extension, Hartington Economic Development, Hartington Chamber of Commerce, and Hartington's Community Information Technology Committee. Classes have been offered on electronic retailing, beginning computers, computer maintenance and security, and Excel applications. A series of computer workshops for senior citizens was also offered. The project is now complete.

Project Title: Hometown Competitiveness: Entrepreneurial Training Program

Grantee: Atkinson Public Library

Grant Award: \$3,598

The Atkinson Public Library purchased two computers in order to offer the Edge entrepreneurial training program at the library. Eleven students completed the program. Students used the computers in class to research information and outside of class to complete assignments. A new business has been started by a student enrolled in the class. Now that the Edge class is finished, two high school students are starting a computer class for seniors. Library patrons use the computers daily to retrieve e-mail,

surf the Internet, or to use the Microsoft Office programs the library has available. The library will be offering computer classes during the winter months. The project is now complete.

Project Title: IT Businesses: Assessment, Marketing and Recruitment

Grantee: City of Aurora

Grant Award: \$5,000

An assessment instrument to analyze what IT services, materials, and products are purchased from outside the geographic area has been developed. Fifty-two percent of area businesses have completed the survey. The analysis is presently 70% complete.

When the analysis is completed, the Hamilton County Information Technology Corporation Board of Directors will determine which IT enterprises should be targeted for recruitment to Aurora. The Aurora Technology Center is also updating its Web site and brochure. This task is 70% complete. Since the implementation of the TIGER grant, additional grant monies have been secured. It seems the TIGER grant has been a catalyst that helped generate much enthusiasm and brought forth numerous community volunteers to aid in the overall effort to work towards the recruitment and retention of information technology businesses and services.

Project Title: Oakland Business Portal

Grantee: UN-L Extension in Burt County

Grant Award: \$5,000

This project entails building a business portal for home-based and small businesses to market goods and services produced in the Oakland (NE) area. The goal is to initially offer a free Web presence to spur growth in local businesses. As these businesses grow and their needs change, so will their Web sites. The business portal will be sustained by having businesses owners pay for modifications, upgrades and more sophisticated back-end applications as needed.

The primary structure of the Oakland Business Portal and content management system to support it are built. By mid-August the business portal and Web site builder will be integrated on a host server. Plans are underway to present e-commerce training to small businesses beginning in mid-August. When the project was announced there was a great deal of interest from the business community. Several businesses have inquired about participating. Most reported that time and cost are the biggest barriers preventing them from having a presence on the Web.