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Letter on Action Initiatives

Connecting Stanislaus County Participants

Steering Committee Agenda - 8/16/2000

## **CONNECTING STANISLAUS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **THE CHALLENGE**

The largest economic transformation since the Industrial Revolution is upon us.

Communication technology is changing the way we learn, work, and do business. Through the use of high speed fiber optics and the Internet, information in all its forms travels faster and further each day, saving valuable time and labor cost.

Each of us is now linked to a global marketplace. Economic regions are fast becoming the engines of this global economy. Electronic commerce is one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy. In this changing environment, businesses and public service providers have the opportunity to interact more directly and more quickly with their customers. Access to high-speed services is a checklist item for companies seeking relocation. We can attract those businesses and help established local companies and local entrepreneurs compete in the global marketplace by providing reliable high-speed services. This economic growth would bring high wage jobs and improved quality of life/quality of place to our local economy.

Putting public services on-line can help customers get the information they need, when they need it. Businesses and homeowners can avoid time-consuming trips to government offices to get forms and submit permit applications. Legislative action can be easily monitored, and e-mail from voters to elected officials can help those officials stay in touch to make informed decisions.

This report highlights several months of dialogue and assessment of our community and its technological preparedness. Sponsored by all of the nine cities, the Great Valley Center, and Stanislaus County, this effort underscores our level of readiness to participate in the new economy.

### **BACKGROUND**

Prior to 1984, American Telephone & Telegraph (AT&T) was universally recognized as the world's best and largest telecommunications provider. In 1984, the federal government split the company into Regional Bell Operating Companies. AT&T continued to provide long distance services. In 1996, the Telecommunications Act was passed, creating a new marketplace that allowed cable and other communication companies to offer a wide range of services. Service providers are developing new ways to make faster video, data and voice information available to more people through the use of new technology. The marketplace restrictions that have traditionally segregated long distance and regional telephone companies, cable companies, and other types of telecommunications providers are being eliminated.

The Information Superhighway, a nation-wide network of fiber optic cable that runs along side the nations' interstate highway system, covers most areas of the country, making it possible for cities, towns and communities to connect their local networks to this communication backbone. The so-called "last mile" connectivity from the backbone to local businesses, public institutions and people's homes is a challenge the local service providers and the community must meet. While striking advances have been made in the capabilities of the service providers, it is the "last mile" cabling that is the final barrier to speed and ease of use. Cable television providers use coaxial cable, which has the capacity for more information and better reliability, but providers have been slow to offer Internet services, and service is not available in many rural areas. In recent years, the development of fiber optic technology has contributed to the growing deployment of broadband networks that allow for the transmission of audio, video and data. The high cost of deploying of coaxial and fiber optic cabling means that it is slow to permeate the market, expensive for the consumer, and usually not available outside the urban areas. New wireless technologies often have the best promise of connecting rural areas with reliable and affordable service.

### **CONNECTING STANISLAUS COUNTY**

In the spring of 2000, the county and its nine cities adopted visioning statements designed to guide growth and development efforts through the next twenty-five years and beyond. One of the visioning statements is: "The cities and county of Stanislaus will adopt policies and practices to take full advantage of advances in communication technologies." This guiding principal gave the direction needed to proceed with a study of the availability and use of advanced communication technology in the county.

The Stanislaus County Steering Committee was formed, consisting of approximately one hundred representatives from major sectors of the economy. Seven sector teams were established in the areas of technology, business, government, education/library, healthcare, community-based organizations, and agriculture.

Service providers developed a multi-vendor baseline report and map of the county, showing the areas that had access to high-speed fiber optic lines (see map next page).

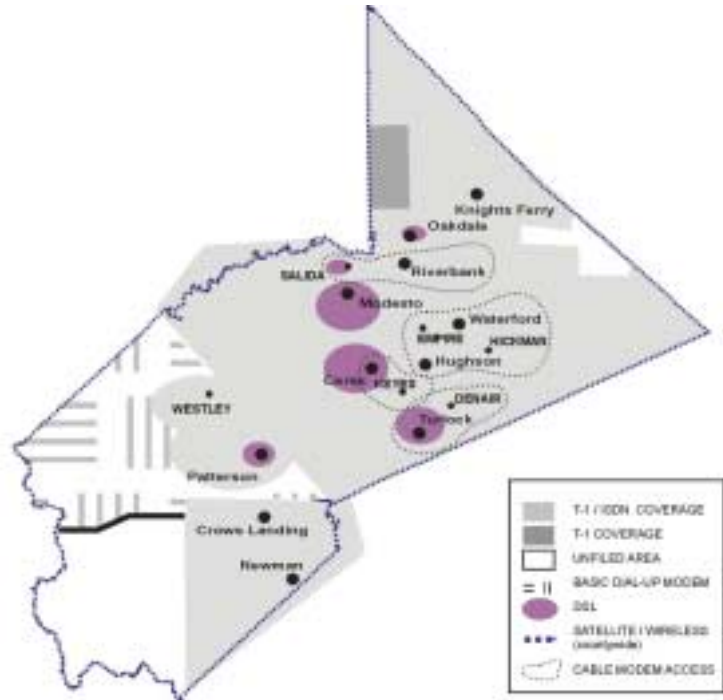
Each sector team used the "Global E-Commerce Readiness" Guide, developed by the Computer Systems Policy Project (CSPP), an association of the CEO's of the major computer systems companies in the United States. On a four-stage scale, most of the sector teams placed themselves at stage one or two, with the desire to move to stage three or four within a twelve-month period. Specific goals for improvement were then developed by each sector.

High priority initiatives are being developed into a proposal that will be submitted to community decision-makers.

### Assessment Results

Most urban areas in Stanislaus County have access to some kind of high-speed connection, starting with ISDN and T-1. In several areas (see map insert), cable modem service is available. Outside of the urban centers the picture is mixed. ISDN can be too expensive for many people and DSL is not yet available.

Large businesses can get the services they need, though at premium rates. Smaller businesses are waiting for more affordable high-speed service. There is a good supply of competitive Internet Service Providers who are prepared to serve as the conduit for high-speed services whenever that infrastructure is put into place.



Internet access is available to 100% of our schools. Currently at least 80% of our schools and 30% of our classrooms in public and private K-12 schools have Internet connections. The Modesto Junior College has 30 on-line classes today reaching 600 students. CSU Stanislaus is also active on the Net.

There are over 100 public access devices in the libraries, with 60 more on the way. Out of 1,600 members, the Modesto Chamber of Commerce found that 800 have e-mail addresses. Many of those are with Internet Service Providers like America On-Line, indicating that most companies have not set up Internet domains, the first step to e-commerce. Stanislaus County and City governments are developing new services aggressively such as on-line registration for community recreation programs. In late 1999, about 52% of homes in Stanislaus County had computers, a figure comparable to the U.S. average. But this is significantly below the average for more technology rich communities like Sacramento where penetration is 62%.

### WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

The benefits of advanced telecommunication capability can be optimized only if there is substantial commitment to infrastructure, education, and community awareness. For people to trust on-line transactions, the access must be there when wanted, and at an affordable price. If service is slow, inconsistent, or too

expensive, local business won't invest in e-business options, local community-based organizations won't develop a web presence, and local consumers will be shut off from the myriad of opportunities that await them on-line. To raise awareness of the potential benefits of technology, we can organize technology fairs and put kiosks in strategic locations.

Other findings and ideas that came out of the assessment process include:

- Establish a clearinghouse for used computers. Ask businesses, education and government to donate surplus machine for refurbishing and distribution to parents and non-profits.
- Work with the schools and training institutions to increase the supply of technically skilled workers for web site, software and network design. To overcome skill barriers work with educational institutions to develop training programs tailored to specific sectors of an industry.
- Encourage electronic procurement and permitting systems. Government agencies should partner with the business community, putting forms on line and accepting electronic payments for permits and licenses.
- Develop a countywide on-line directory of public services to make it easier for people to find the services they need.
- Use web-mobiles with high-speed wireless connections to bring the Internet to remote communities and field workers.
- Establish convenient, secure, well-managed public access centers should be developed to open doors for those who can not afford the new technologies.

## **PLAN OF ACTION**

To bring our community on-line with the opportunities of the new global economy, six key initiatives have been identified and are being developed. These initiatives are:

1. expand and target technology training programs,
2. develop a community portal,
3. advance on-line procurement/permitting for business and the public sector,
4. increase the availability of computers in the home and in technology centers,
5. create a countywide on-line directory of governmental services, and
6. establish a centralized geographic information system (GIS) for the region.

### ***Develop Targeted Technology Training Programs:***

Four groups want special training on Internet-related technologies: agricultural businesses, small and medium enterprises, healthcare providers, and community-based organizations. To develop specialized curricula we will form partnerships between the local educational institutions, business leaders and trade associations. We will also develop a campaign to promote the availability of the new classes to the target groups.

### ***Build a Community Information Portal:***

Finding the right department or agency that serves your community can be a challenge. We need a "no wrong door" portal on the Web to help businesses,

residents, and visitors find the government and community information they need quickly and conveniently. A team consisting of the local city governments, the county government, a local newspaper and a private business are developing a design for the site and a business strategy to assure its long-term success.

***Adopt E-Commerce Practices in Business and Government:***

With the help of trade associations, we will identify industry segments that do a lot of business-to-business and business-to-government transactions. We will select the groups where technology can make a difference, and seek out best practices and technical solutions. We hope local entrepreneurs will develop solutions where none exist today, creating new national and international businesses, and role models for the rest of the world.

We are also investigating opportunities to streamline permitting for agricultural industries. On-line permitting can save time for growers, reduce trips to City Hall and facilitate collecting data for analysis.

***Bridging the Digital Divide:***

Educators agree that more needs to be done to help parents get involved with their children's education. We are looking for ways to recycle used computers and get them into the homes of low-income parents. Then we need Internet connections and training so parents can e-mail their children's teachers, keep up with assignments, and get advice on how they can help their children learn. Parents can also have immediate access to the school calendar.

Our community-based organizations also need computers. The recycling center can help meet that need in partnership with training organizations to provide classes on using technology in the not-for-profit sector.

Finally, we will compile a directory of public access centers where those who can not afford to own computers can use e-mail and the Internet to obtain information they need.

***E-Government Strategies:***

Almost every city in Stanislaus County has a web site, but only a few offer any on-line services today. City officials are now meeting to develop their e-government strategies and share lessons learned. They are also looking for ways to reduce costs by sharing internally developed software, and jointly purchasing software packages from vendors. We believe that a coordinated approach to the development of shared technology and software tools will open significant opportunities for local governments. Local agency collaboration is essential in the advancement of electronic systems that allow for service transaction and information sharing.

### ***A Centralized Geographic Information System:***

Realizing that a regional GIS program must have an organized and sustainable

hub, this initiative outlines a proposal that begins with a centralized GIS component at the county government level. Once the hub is established, additional partner jurisdictions and agencies will be encouraged to participate so that eventually the county hub will become a regional (countywide) joint power system.

### **A CALL FOR CHAMPIONS**

Connecting Stanislaus County is an important step toward strengthening our competitive position in the Information Age. It will help us prepare our children for new and exciting careers, and further enhance the quality of life for all of us.

Achieving the goals of Connecting Stanislaus County will require collaboration, coordination and, most important, *leadership*. We need people from the business community and government to step forward and form teams to develop and implement action initiatives.

**Funding proposals for these initiatives are currently in development. For more information on how you can become part of these efforts please contact:**

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## ABOUT THIS REPORT

Connecting Stanislaus County is a program of the County Chief Executive Office that includes representatives from all of the County's cities and economic sectors.

In 1997 the cities and counties launched a countywide Visioning Project. We developed a set of guiding principles that will help us plan for and adapt to a new wave of growth that is sweeping the Central Valley. One of the action items from the Project focuses on communications technologies:

The cities and County of Stanislaus will adopt policies and practices to take full advantage of advances in communication technologies including:

1. Establishment and maintenance of a state-of-the-art network serving all areas of the county.
2. Use of technology to engage citizens more actively in public issues and to improve inter-agency communications.
3. Establishment of sites and services to attract technology-based business.

In 1999, the Great Valley Center launched New Valley Connexions, a State-funded program to,

*identify opportunities to grow technology-based clusters in the San Joaquin Valley in order to make the Valley more competitive, enhance its base of agriculture and natural resources, attract compatible investment, and improve the quality of life.*

In May 2000, New Valley Connexions released *Connecting to Compete, a Telecommunications Strategy for the San Joaquin Valley* and the *Technical Supplement* in August 2000. These reports encouraged us to develop our plans to take advantage of the new advanced communications services.

The County engaged the services of Seth Fearey, co-author of the New Valley Connexions reports, to conduct an assessment of the region's readiness to compete in the New Economy. In April 2000, we formed a Steering Committee consisting of representatives from all the major sectors of the County's economy, including the major communications services providers. Using a guide developed by the Computer Systems Policy Project,<sup>1</sup> the Committee held a series of community assessment workshops in May and June. The Guide helped us identify which stage we were in for our communications infrastructure and each sector of the community. The teams then decided what stage they wanted to achieve in one year. The teams also brainstormed action initiatives to help

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<sup>1</sup> The Computer Systems Project, a public policy advocacy group, is comprised of the Chairmen and Chief Executive Officers from America's leading information technology companies.

move from the current stage to the next. This report summarizes the results of those workshops.

In July 2000, we launched Phase II of the program, development of action initiatives. Each sector teams met three times to select and develop the best ideas for projects to advance the region's connectivity and use of high-speed communications services. The appendix of this report includes an August 2000 letter from Seth Fearey on the progress of those ideas.

<b>Summary Assessment</b>		
	<b>Current Stage</b>	<b>1-year Goal</b>
Urban Infrastructure	3	4
Rural Infrastructure	2	3
Schools & Libraries	2	3
Businesses	2	3
Agriculture	2+	4
Healthcare	2	3
Government	3	4
Community-Based Organizations	1	2

**Definitions:**

**Stage 1: Services** are limited and expensive. Few people use the Internet regularly.

**Stage 2: Many** people have access to the Internet. Some businesses and most schools are on-line and a community-wide technology plan is being developed.

**Stage 3: Some** people and businesses have high-speed access to the Internet. All schools are connected and most classrooms are wired. Many consumers use the Internet for complex transactions. A community-wide technology plan is in place.

**Stage 4: Almost** every person and businesses has affordable, high-speed access to the Internet. Businesses are dynamic. Teachers and the workforce are well trained to use the technologies efficiently. The technology plan is being updated.

## **Tools and Technology**

### **Why Is This Important?**

To compete in the New Economy communities need affordable access to high-speed communications services. More and more applications, including on-line training, catalog shopping, customer service, and entertainment require high-speed networks to deliver audio and video to the desktop. Many companies looking to re-locate to the Central Valley expect ready access to high-speed services, and they want their employees to be able to work at home, providing more flexibility and reducing the stresses of commuting. At \$40 to \$50 per month for unlimited use, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) and cable modem services provide an affordable solution for many homes and small businesses. In the United States these technologies began rolling out in earnest in 2000. The number of subscribers is only a few million today, but growing as fast as the communications companies can provide the services. Larger businesses need more powerful services, with dedicated, lines. New service installation should not take more than a few days. The networks must be reliable and secure if businesses are going to integrate the Internet into their business strategies. Consumers and businesses should have a choice of service providers to help keep rates affordable and services competitive. Increasingly, businesses and new homebuyers expect to find their buildings pre-wired for high-speed networking.

### **How Are We Doing?**

Modesto, Turlock, Ceres, Salida, and Oakdale have access to DSL services. Turlock, Ceres, Denair, Keyes and Waterford have cable modem services. ISDN is available almost everywhere, but the relatively high cost (typically \$100/month) is keeping demand down. Cellular phone and pager coverage is very good. Major businesses can order a wide variety of landline-based high-speed services, but they have to pay installation fees that can be substantial. There are several competitive local exchange carriers in the major cities providing good competition for the business market. Service is generally good, but installation times can be long for some potential customers.

Based on a preliminary review of public plans provided by the communications companies, and aided by the advances of wireless services, all communities now have at least one high-speed service capability.

### **What Needs to be Done?**

We launched a communications services "baseline assessment" project to get a clear picture of what services are being offered where, and near term plans for upgrades. The major communications companies are moving aggressively to deploy the new services. SBC Communications (Pacific Bell) has committed to providing DSL service to 80% of California customers by the end of 2002 via "Project Pronto". Charter Communications is upgrading its facilities to offer cable modem service to all of its customers.

	Stage	Goal
Available Local Backbone	3	4
Ability to Meet Demand	2 rural 4 urban	3 rural 4 urban
Range of Services – Residential, Small Business	3	3+
Range of Services – Large Businesses	4	4
Affordability – Residential, Small Business	3	3+
Affordability – Large Business	4	4
Quality of Service	2+	3
Competition – Data Services	2	3
Competition – Internet Service Providers	3	4

**For more information:**

Project Pronto: [www.pacbell.com](http://www.pacbell.com)

Charter Communications: [www.chartercom.com/](http://www.chartercom.com/)

Evans Communications: [www.evanscompanies.com/](http://www.evanscompanies.com/)

**Connecting Schools and Libraries**

**Why is This Important?**

Industry is desperate for workers who are skilled in the use of computers and the Internet. Tens of thousands of jobs are going unfilled every year, and the problem is growing. Teachers are finding that kids stay motivated when they can use the Internet to research and prepare homework assignments. It is easier to keep a curriculum up-to-date on the Web than by depending on textbooks that were printed years ago. Busy parents now find they can communicate with their children’s teachers by e-mail and play a stronger role in their education. Public libraries remain the great equalizer; public access devices allow everyone access to the latest research. Some people are starting companies in the library, using e-mail for correspondence and managing their web sites.

## How Are We Doing?

At least 80% of our schools and 30% of our classrooms in public and private K-12 schools have Internet connections. The student to computer ratio is probably close to 10 to 1, but we do not have good data. Many teachers have taken professional development classes in using the Internet in the classroom. The Modesto Junior College has 30 on-line classes today reaching 600 students. CSU Stanislaus is also active on the Net. Internet-based classes are popular with high school students wanting more challenge, professionals developing their skills, and retirees exploring new interests. There are over 100 public access devices in the County's libraries, with 60 more on the way.

## What Needs to be Done?

Improving test scores is the highest priority of our K-12 system; putting computers in classrooms is no panacea. But there are proven benefits to helping parents get more involved in their children's education. We need to find ways to put more computers in homes and give parents greater access to tools that help them help their kids. We need better data on the availability of computers in schools and on teacher training. We can do more to help teachers learn the new tools, and strengthen technical support for computer networks. A new school will test the new "thin client" machines that should be easier to administer. The Modesto Junior College is testing a wireless communications infrastructure. Lessons learned from these experiences can help other campuses reduce costs and avoid mistakes.

	Stage	Goal
K-12 Access	2	3
K-12 Administration	2+	3
Higher Education	3+	4
Libraries	4	4+

For more information:

Yosemite Community College [www.yosemite.cc.ca.us](http://www.yosemite.cc.ca.us)

California State University, Stanislaus [www.csustan.edu](http://www.csustan.edu)

Stanislaus County Office of Education: [www.stan-co.k12.ca.us](http://www.stan-co.k12.ca.us)

Stanislaus County Library System: [www.ainet.com/scfl/scfl.htm](http://www.ainet.com/scfl/scfl.htm)

## Connecting Businesses

### Why is This Important?

Electronic commerce is transforming every industry. Vertically integrated companies are breaking themselves up and joining networks of companies that partner to deliver products and services to customers. Businesses that do not pursue access to high-speed services are becoming less competitive. Effective use of high-speed services helps companies reduce time-to-market and waste, while increasing customer service. The media has focused everyone's attention on

business-to-consumer e-commerce, but the real action, in dollar terms, is in business-to-*business* e-commerce. Electronic transactions with consumers were just \$7 billion in 1998 versus \$43 billion spent on business-to-business transactions. Forrester Research predicts all e-commerce transactions will grow rapidly to \$1.3 trillion in 2003.

Business also relies on advanced communications services for internal operations, such as connecting manufacturing to warehousing, sales and delivery. Graphics designers ship illustrations to printers across the country in seconds instead of days. Executives in large corporations use video mail to keep employees informed about changes in strategy. Intranets help managers administer salaries, and employees manage their benefits programs. The hierarchical chain of command is evolving into an amorphous web of communications networks that come together to solve one problem then re-configure for the next.

Companies that are slow to adopt these new technologies are starting to lose business to more aggressive competitors, and upstarts in other regions and overseas. At the same time local sales tax revenues are declining as consumers and businesses go to Amazon.com, Travelocity, and Autobytel for lower prices.

**How are We Doing?**

Out of 1,600 members, the Modesto Chamber of Commerce found that 800 have e-mail addresses. Many of those are with Internet Service Providers like America On-Line, indicating that most companies have not set up Internet domains, the first step to e-commerce. The local ISPs report strong demand for Internet services from local businesses, but demand for e-commerce services is just starting. Less than 5% of the ads in the Modesto Bee include a web address.

**What Needs to be Done?**

We need better data on Internet use by the business community. The Chamber of Commerce, the *Modesto Bee*, the Stanislaus County Economic Development Corporation and others are developing a survey. Many business people are very hesitant to invest in e-commerce. They need more information on the risks and rewards. Government agencies should partner with the business community; put forms on line and accept electronic payments for permits and licenses. The quality of some phone lines is a problem. Public agencies should review local ordinances to see if they can alleviate barriers to the deployment of advanced services.

	Stage	Goal
Number of Domains	2	3
Number of Websites	2+	4
Local Area Networks	4	4
Market Development	3+	4
Business-to-Business Transactions	2	3

For more information:

Modesto Chamber of Commerce: [www.modchamber.com](http://www.modchamber.com)

Purchase Pro On-line Marketplace: [www.purchasepro.com](http://www.purchasepro.com)

Stanislaus County Economic Development Corporation: [www.scedco.org](http://www.scedco.org)

The Modesto Bee: [www.modbee.com](http://www.modbee.com)

## **Connecting Agriculture**

### **Why is this Important?**

The agriculture industry, from seed companies, to growers, irrigation equipment manufacturers, fertilizer companies, distributors and retailers, is becoming more dependent on technology. The industry has always depended heavily on access to information, especially weather forecasts and the prices of commodities.

Advanced communications services are helping the industry become even more efficient. Electronic trading exchanges are making it easier to check prices and match buyers and sellers. Electronic commerce is connecting the supply chain, reducing time and errors and eliminating a lot of manual paper processing. Some growers are using the Internet to reach global niche markets directly. Others are putting temperature and humidity sensors in their fields to provide early warnings for pest control. When certain conditions are met, a radio signal goes to a computer and sets off a pager to alert the farmer to get his equipment to a specific field.

### **How are We Doing?**

In one survey only 20 companies out of 425 had e-mail addresses. Larger companies have invested in computers and networking, but the great majority of companies are small and are just getting started with networks. The retail end of the supply chain is being aggressive about using the Web for marketing, but further upstream few companies have taken the first steps. The almond and cheese industries are active in this area.

### **What Needs to be Done?**

The primary barrier to using the Internet for the Ag industry is a lack of understanding of the benefits. Many business people see the up-front costs of getting started, but they don't see how the new services will reduce costs, increase efficiencies, and grow sales. The sector team identified several resources to address this challenge. The Ag Center can set up a demonstration facility where people can try out new services and tools. The local colleges can develop e-commerce-training programs tailored to the industry. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and Small Business Association have programs to help with education. The industry trade associations can help get the word out, bring in speakers, and share best practice stories.

	Stage	Goal
Number of Domains	2	3
Number of Websites	2+	4
Local Area Networks	4	4
Market Development	3+	4
Business-to-Business Transactions	2	3

Links:

Nut Trade Board: [www.nuttrade.com](http://www.nuttrade.com)

California Dairy Association: [www.calif-dairy.com](http://www.calif-dairy.com)

Agex Agricultural Exchange: [www.agex.com](http://www.agex.com)

Agriculture Loan Agency: [www.agriloans.com](http://www.agriloans.com)

Basket of Fruit Web Site: [www.basketoffruit.com](http://www.basketoffruit.com)

## **Connecting Healthcare**

### **Why is This Important?**

The healthcare industry depends heavily on technology, but until very recently it has not invested in computers and communications like most industries. Patient records are being transferred to computers. Now hospital doctors can call up a chart the moment it is needed instead making a request days ahead of time. When prescribing medications, doctors can check for contraindications based on the patient's current medications and the latest medical reports. Doctors can send prescriptions to pharmacies electronically, eliminating problems with reading handwriting. To save time and costs, healthcare providers can now join electronic purchasing networks to buy supplies and medications. Videoconferencing with specialists can save rural patients unnecessary trips to the hospital. The Web contains a wealth of information about medical conditions, drugs, and preventative measures. Patients are walking into doctors' offices better informed, and more in control of their treatment.

### **How Are We Doing?**

Information on the use of computers and the Internet by healthcare providers in the County is sparse. Conversion to computer-based records ranges from 0% to 100% at the major hospitals. We do not know how many private practitioners have adopted the latest tools. Most doctors are becoming more comfortable with computers, but some are still holding back. A major barrier is the uncertainties of dealing in a highly regulated environment. Is it legal to dispense medical advice by e-mail? If the patient did not visit the office will the insurance provider pay the doctor?

### **What Needs to be Done?**

We need to collect more data on the use of computers and advanced communications by the medical profession, including private practitioners and alternative healthcare providers. To raise awareness of the potential benefits of technology we can organize technology fairs and put kiosks in hospitals for

demonstrations. To overcome skill barriers we can work with the educational institutions to develop training programs tailored to healthcare providers, including nurses and clerical staff. We can pilot electronic connections to pharmacies for sending and renewing prescriptions. The cost of technology is a major barrier for some institutions. We need to support them with fund- raising programs and grants.

	Stage	Goal
E-Mail/Web Access	2	3
Patient Records	3-	3
Home Solutions	2-	3
Pharmaceutical Links	1	2+

For more information: [www.dmc-modesto.com/home/home.cfm](http://www.dmc-modesto.com/home/home.cfm)  
[www.gvhc.org](http://www.gvhc.org)  
[www.schsa.org](http://www.schsa.org)  
 Sutter Health: [www.sutterhealth.org](http://www.sutterhealth.org)

## **Connecting Government and Citizens**

### **Why is This Important?**

Advanced communications services can be a powerful tool for increasing efficiencies within public agencies and making public services easier to use. Internal networks are breaking down barriers between departments, making it easier to share data, and reducing redundancies and errors. Auction sites, including consumer-oriented E-Bay, are helping public agencies sell surplus equipment. Businesses want government to put more services on-line so they don't have to drive to City Hall to get forms and submit paperwork. A homeowner wants to be able to get permission to start a small project on the weekend, instead of having to take time off from work to get a simple permit.

### **How Are We Doing?**

Most of the cities in Stanislaus County have web sites; none offer transactions today. The Internet is available to most public sector employees, but there are still holdouts. Some managers and employees need more information on acceptable use policies. Agencies are struggling to find and keep skilled web designers to manage thousands of web pages. Only the largest cities have developed formal technology plans. But that is changing quickly. Turlock is developing new services aggressively, starting with on-line registration for community recreation programs. Modesto has strong support from the City Council to add more services to their web site. Stanislaus County has conducted an internal technology audit and assessment. The County Board of Supervisors also approved a strategic plan, which includes an emphasis on developing Web-enabled applications that go beyond the posting of information and provide interactivity and transactional capability.

In late 1999, about 52% of homes had computers in Stanislaus County, a figure comparable to the U.S. average.<sup>2</sup> But this is significantly below the average for more technology rich communities like Sacramento where penetration is 62%. Only 35% of Latino homes in the County are likely to have computers.

**What Needs to be Done?**

We need more information on what our public agencies are doing today. Various agencies are gathering information on *internal* technology needs, but we need more information on what is needed to connect public agencies with the business community, residents, and other agencies. Public agencies need to partner with the business community and with each other. There is tremendous potential for sharing lessons learned, best practices, software, and procurement agreements. A countywide on-line directory of public services would make it easier for people to find the services they need, and it would be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Electronic procurement and permitting systems would increase efficiencies and make the region more attractive to businesses. There is a wealth of information in established Geographic Information Systems (GIS) databases scattered among the agencies. Networking those systems would increase sharing and dramatically increase the payback of our investment.

We need to work with the schools and training institutions to increase the supply of technically skilled workers for web site design and management, and to administer networks.

We can do more to help residents gain access to computers and the Internet. Convenient, secure, well-managed public access centers can open doors for those who can not afford the new technologies. Like bookmobiles, webmobiles with high-speed wireless connections could bring the Internet to remote communities and field workers.

	Stage	Goal
Web Sites	2	4
Employees On-Line	3+	4
Citizen Access at Home and Work	3	4
Planning	1+	3+

For more information:

City of Modesto: [www.ci.modesto.ca.us](http://www.ci.modesto.ca.us)

City of Turlock: [www.ci.turlock.ca.us](http://www.ci.turlock.ca.us)

City of Ceres: [www.ci.ceres.ca.us](http://www.ci.ceres.ca.us)

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<sup>2</sup> Baldassare, Mark, Special Survey of the Central Valley, in collaboration with the Great Valley Center, Public Policy Institute of California, November 1999. Based on a telephone survey of 2,016 residents of the eighteen county Central Valley.

## Connecting Community-Based Organizations

### Why is This Important?

Churches, social services clubs, charities, museums, libraries, sports leagues, welfare programs, chambers of commerce, and many others help make our communities work. All of these organizations can take advantage of computers and networks to streamline and automate procedures, simplify bookkeeping, manage staff and volunteers, and deliver services. New web-based services have appeared that help recruit and coordinate volunteers, and collect electronic donations. The Net allows YMCA counselors to submit time cards from camp; it helps find volunteers for local Earth Day; it lets the Modesto Chamber save money by e-mailing meeting notices and minutes. Grant applications can be prepared more quickly and transmitted in seconds. But many non-profits depend on donated equipment that is often so old it consumes more in maintenance than it gives in productivity. And many non-profit managers do not see the potential of technology for helping the organization deliver on its mission.

### How Are We Doing?

There are about 250 community-based organizations (CBOs) in the County of which about 175 have paid staff. Perhaps 100 to 150 have computers, and 15 to 25 have web sites. National organizations, like the Boy Scouts of America have web sites, but local chapters may not.

The United Way wants to use the Net to save operating costs, so it is encouraging its members to get connected. Most CBOs in the County, however, are not aware of the potential of advanced communications services. Their attention is consumed by tight budgets and pressing demands from clients and members. The quality of communications lines can be problem, making the Internet a frustrating tool.

### What Needs to be Done?

A technology workshop targeted to non-profits would help many understand the potential by connecting non-profits with appropriate training on new technologies including website development. We could establish a clearinghouse for used computers. Businesses could donate surplus machine for refurbishing and distribution to non-profits. The libraries need more printers. Some schools have extra machines that could go to the homes of parents. We should explore setting up a special communications network for the county – stanislaus.net. Some foundations are looking for more opportunities to support the Valley. We should ask them for help with implementing these ideas.

	Stage	Goal
Staff On-Line	1	2
Communications & Services	1+	2

For more information:

Center for Excellence in Non-Profits: [www.cen.org](http://www.cen.org)

Wired for Good: [www.wiredforgood.org](http://www.wiredforgood.org)

Compass Point: [www.compasspoint.org/events/tech/](http://www.compasspoint.org/events/tech/)

### **Appendix**

- August 28 letter from Connected Communities on proposed action initiatives.
- List of participants in Connecting Stanislaus County

August 28, 2000

Mr. Richard Jantz  
Deputy Executive Officer  
Stanislaus County  
1010 10<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 6  
Modesto, CA 95354

Dear Richard,

I thought the steering committee meeting on August 16<sup>th</sup> went very well. I was very impressed by the work that went into the conceptual plans and the presentations by the project champions. The high level of enthusiasm for the program was very apparent.

There are now 12 project proposals on the table. Based on what I heard I would like to make the following recommendations for the next step: turning conceptual plans into proposals that can be presented to the Workforce Investment Board, City Councils and the Board of Supervisors.

of the projects look like they will continue with or without direct support of Connecting Stanislaus County steering committee:

- ◆ **Regional GIS**
- ◆ **Government services and forms**
- ◆ **Surveys proposed by the Chamber, the Modesto Bee, and for healthcare**

I suggest providing these projects with encouragement, keeping them on our list, and asking the champions to provide the steering committee with regular progress reports. The results of the surveys should be distributed widely.

2. It is important to finish the communications infrastructure baseline report. The preliminary findings have already helped leaders better understand the situation, and it has brought favorable publicity to the project.

The communications technology team needs a neutral party to call meetings and consolidate information. Your office should continue to play that role.

In addition, we should actively recruit the communications companies to the implementation projects. These companies can help each project succeed.

3. I suggest that the remaining projects be consolidated into the following five categories for development of action plans and proposals to the decision-makers.

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1755 Oak Avenue  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

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815/346-0686 efax

Fearey@con-com.net

### ◆ **Technology Training**

The conceptual plans identified four target audiences for training on Internet-related technologies, each of which will need a customized curriculum: agricultural businesses, small and medium enterprises, healthcare providers, and community-based organizations. In addition, parents participating in the home computer program will need training.

Rather than launch four or five separate projects, let's create a partnership of educational and training institutions that develops programs for all of our target sectors.

There are at least three training institutions we can partner with: Modesto Junior College, CSU Stanislaus, and Computer Tutor. The K-12 system and the County Superintendent of Schools may also be willing to participate by offering their computer labs for classes and homework in the evenings. The Computer Room at the Ag Center should also be considered as a possible training site.

In addition to developing specialized curricula, the programs need to develop a marketing and promotion strategy to get strong attendance. For example, the local ISPs and web designers might be willing to offer a limited number of free web sites as an incentive to sign up for classes. Such incentives worked well in the City of Santa Clarita.

### ◆ **Government and Community Portals**

Portals have proven to be challenging in other communities, but I think the portal concept the cities presented has a good chance of succeeding because it is focused on just government services. I also see long term benefits in the creation of a portal steering committee that will bring representatives of the major public entities together to discuss public sector applications on the Web, and related policy issues, on a regular basis.

A key challenge is the *maintenance* of the portal and who will chair the program. The County is the logical answer, but the other jurisdictions have to accept this leadership. A second challenge is gaining commitment for a budget that includes funds for advertising and promoting the site. (The committee will grapple with the question of whether to accept advertising or sponsorships on the site to help defray costs.)

It is my understanding that the Modesto Bee is very interested in supporting a community portal with input from all sectors of the community. The government portal should be link to the community portal. As we discussed the idea is to create a "no wrong door" approach to accessing the community via the Internet.

### ◆ ***Supply Chain Integration***

The concept for the agriculture industry “advance on-line procurement” focused on e-commerce training. Let’s move the training component to the training program and focus this project on procurement, i.e. business-to-business e-commerce, or “supply chain integration.”

I further suggest focusing this concept on the agriculture industry. Let’s pick one segment of the agriculture industry, e.g. dairy or fruits and nuts, and develop an industry-specific supply chain integration program. With the help of a trade association we can identify the pieces of the industry that do a lot of business-to-business and business-to-government transactions. We can bring in technology vendors to provide solutions, and possibly encourage local entrepreneurs to fill in pieces that do not exist today.

If we pick an industry segment that has not tested e-commerce yet, we can get national recognition for the project. Lessons learned can be extended to other industries, like vegetable growing, construction, and distribution.

We also discussed putting permits on line for all the agriculture industries, e.g. for pesticide application. This concept should be pursued in that it is relatively easy to do and it would provide a time saving service to local farmers. The project will demonstrate the value of being connected and act as a role model for others.

### ◆ ***Access To Technology***

The education initiative highlights the need to get computers into the homes of parents of K-12 age children. There are many homes in the region that can not afford computers and network connections. In addition, the community-based organizations need more and better computers for their operations.

I suggest focusing on the program on recycling used computers for the benefit of low-income parents and community-based organizations. Meeting the needs of these two groups would make a substantial contribution to bridging the digital divide.

This project will require the development of strong public-private partnerships. We will need industry to contribute the computers, someone (the State? Foundations?) to contribute funds for refurbishing the computers (\$150 to \$300 each), the recycling program being managed by the County Dept. Of Education, Internet services from the local ISPs, training for CBOs from a local institution and the local schools to provide content and applications that help parents get involved with their children’s education. The Great Valley Center’s digital divide program could be a valuable partner.

I understand the County Chief Executive Office is initiating a project to compile a directory of public access centers and put it on-line. I think this effort will be a great contribution to bridging the digital divide.

◆ ***Software Sharing***

Most of the cities in Stanislaus County are experimenting with Web-based services. By collaborating, the cities can negotiate for better prices for software packages and share lessons learned. In some cases, cities are developing new software that can be shared with other cities.

The software sharing conceptual plan does a good job of describing the potential project. My suggestion is to start with Turlock's parks & recreation class registration software. The goal should be to get every city in the County using that software in one year. The second project could be collaboration on the design of city web sites. I also suggest forming a technology committee that brings the cities together to discuss opportunities, projects and lessons learned on a regular basis.

**Next Steps**

I suggest organizing one development workshop for each of the five action areas. Each session should just include the project champions, your team, and key partners. The purpose of each workshop would be to draft an action plan/proposal for review by the steering committee and presentation to the community decision-makers.

Let me say again how impressed I am with the excellent work on the conceptual plans. I am already sharing your ideas with other communities.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seth G. Fearey', with a stylized, cursive script.

Seth G. Fearey

## Connecting Stanislaus County Participants

Barry Ackerman	Bronco Wine
Robert Allaire	Stanislaus County
Barbara Anderson	Stanislaus Multi-Cultural Comm Health Coalition
Sue Anderson	Jato Communications
James Armstrong	CPA
Jana Armstrong	Arrival Communications
Candelario Arredondo	Senator Dick Monteith
Bruce Bannerman	City of Oakdale
Bob Gauvreau	Modesto JC
Ron Barber	Stanislaus County Board of Ed
Gregg Bixel	Doctor's Medical Center
Keith Boggs	Stanislaus County
Jim Brackman	Stanislaus County
Carey Brock	Ceres Unified School District
Todd Browning	Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Dale Butler	Stanislaus County
Rhett Calkins	Turlock Irrigation District
A.R. Chubon	Housing Authority Co of Stanislaus
Bill Craft	Pacific Bell
Tom Crain	Counseling Services
Brian Curnow	Sonnet Networking
Erick Davis	Modesto Irrigation District
Harvey De la Cruz	Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Chuck Deschenes	City of Waterford
Marilyn Dompe	Dompe & Associates
Jan Ennenga	Stan Farm Bureau
James Enochs	Modesto City School District
Ken Entin	CSU Stanislaus
Jerry Eppler	Prudential
John Evans	Evans Companies
Sandra Feaster	Pointshare
Beverly Finely	Stan Co Health Services Agency
Suzanne Foster	Stan Co Library
Greg Foulke	Purchase Pro
Ted Franklin	HILMAR CHEESE COMPANY
Alan Fryer	VoIP Solutions
Mike Fuller	Tech Plus
Edgar Garcia	Hispanic Leadership Council
Mike Garcia	American GI Forum
Bob Gauvreaun	Modesto Junior College
William Gibson	Turlock Joint Union School District

Larry Gilbertson	Turlock Irrigation District
Robert Greenawalt	Zemco Sys, CVOC
Kathy Halsey	Pacific Bell
Donna Hansen	City of Modesto
Lori Harvey	Stanislaus County
Anita Hellam	Desarrollo Latino-American
John Herlihy	Fed Land Bank Assoc
Scott Herrmann	Memorial Hospital
Marty Hess	Prudential
Richard Holmer	City of Riverbank
Patrick Hurlock	E.R.VINE & SONS, INC.
Sheila Hurst	Great Valley Center
Berry Jackson	Creative Alternatives
Richard Jantz	Stanislaus County
Jim Jones	Milk Advisory Board
Ken Jordan	Modesto Christian School
Alan Kelly	Net Work Computers
Carman King	Great Valley Center
Steve Kyte	City of Turlock
George Lambert	City of Patterson
Mark Langley	City of Turlock
Mike Larson	Arrival Communications
Renee Ledbetter	City of Modesto
Diana Lewis	City of Turlock
Susan Lilly	United Way
Mark Looker	Looker Communications
Dennis Louis	Stanislaus County
Maithreyi Manoharan	CSU Stanislaus
Mary McDonald	ARBOR Career Center
Heidi McNally-Dial	City of Ceres
Warren Mitchell	Charter Communications
Jim Moore	Hershey Chocolate
Cleve Morris	City of Newman
Chris Murphy	Sierra Pacific Warehouse Group
Bruce Norris	Med America
Raul Ortega	American GI Forum
Phil Osterli	Cooperative Extension & Farm Advisor
Lee Ostlind	Grace Community Church
Ray Parris	Golden Valley Community Health
Rosie Peasley	Empire Union School District
Marty Petersen	County office of Education
Judy Piper	Hughson Unified School District
Kevin Qualle	Adtech Computers
George Rawe	Computer Tutor
Sheri Ribeiro	Sutter Gould Medical Foundation
Stan Risen	Stanislaus County

Brice Russell	HdL Companies
Milana Ruszczuk	Net Work Computers
Roberto Salinas	Newman-Crows Landing District
Franciso Santana	Stan Co Office of Education
Joanne Sbranti	Modesto Bee
Bob Schmal	Harvest of Hope
Karen Servas	YMCA
Kevin Shand	Modesto Chamber of Comm
Margaret Souza	City of Newman
Charline Speck	Stanislaus County Economic Development Corporation
Tim Stranske	Turlock Christian
Larrie Sweet	City of Riverbank
Don Talley	ComputerWare
Michael Tanghe	Bronco
Kathryn Usiak	Center for Human Services
Jim Vallandingham	Pacific Bell
Chuck Van Petten	Cable One
Marcell Vargas	Boy Scouts
Mark Walker	Salida Union School District
David Whiteside	City of Hughson
Nancy Wilkinson	Turlock Joint Union School District
Charles Wright	Stanislaus County
Clement Xavier	Yosemite Community College District
Brian Sarvis	Modesto City Schools
Carole Collins	Stanislaus Multi-Cultural Community Health Coalition
Jim Dorroh	Kemper Technology Consulting
James Armstrong	Clendenin Bird & Company
Jan Ennenga	Stanislaus Farm Bureau
Krista Gettle	Central Valley Digital Network
Ken Hoach	Health Services Agency
Wendy Burns	Health Services Agency
Larry Sweet	City of Riverbank
Ron Cole	Digital Media Productions, Inc.
Seth Fearey	Connected Communities
Wade Williams	Stanislaus County Board of E

Connecting Stanislaus County  
Steering Committee

**MEETING AGENDA**

August 16, 2000 from 9:00 -Noon

Basement Training Room, City/County Building  
1010 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Modesto

- |      |                             |   |
|------|-----------------------------|---|
| I.   | Welcome                     | Richard Jantz, Deputy Executive Officer, Stanislaus County  |
| II.  | Strategy Update             | Seth Fearey, President Connected Communities  |
| III. | Sector Group Presentations: |   |
|      | <b><u>Sector Group</u></b>  | <b><u>Presenter/ Action Item</u></b>  |
|      | Government                  | Donna Hansen, Assistant to the City Manager of Modesto<br>GIS--centralized data management  |
|      |                             | Cleve Morris, City Manager for Newman<br>Sharing of software and web development for cities and county  |
|      |                             | Steve Kyte, City Manager for Turlock<br>Government services and forms   |
|      |                             | Donna Hansen, Assistant to the City Manager of Modesto<br>Develop a government portal   |
|      | Business                    | Chris Murphy, for Modestoview.com<br>Business survey  |
|      |                             | George Rawe, Director for Computer Tutor<br>Internet seminar  |
|      |                             | Ted Franklin, Chief Information Officer for Hilmar Cheese Company<br>Advance on-line procurement for business   |
|      | Agriculture                 | Mark Looker, Looker Communications Consulting<br>Create a e-commerce training program for ag business   |
|      | CBO                         | Dale Butler, Deputy Executive Officer, Stanislaus County<br>CBO countywide network  |
|      | Education                   | Bob Gausman, Division Administrator- Technology & Learning,<br>Stanislaus County Board of Education<br>Increase number of computers in homes for parents and students use |
|      | Healthcare                  | Jim Brackman, Stanislaus County<br>Develop a special curriculum for healthcare providers  |
|      | Technology                  | Kathy Halsey, External Affairs for Pacific Bell<br>Develop a base line report and map   |
| IV.  | Discussion                  | Steering Committee to set priorities  |
| V.   | Next Step                   | Seth Fearey/ Richard Jantz  |