**Creating a Technology Advisory Council
to Advance High Speed Connectivity in Your Community**

Sam Perlman, Economic Development Manager, Door County Economic Development Corporation

RECOGNIZING A PROBLEM

Around 2000, Door County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC) was working with a client who was interested in establishing a call center in Sturgeon Bay. Many year-round, benefits-paying jobs; a boon for any community, but even more so for a county whose economy is so seasonal. When this prospect looked into our telecom infrastructure and outage history, however, they walked away. A call center requires 24/7/365 telecom service, with 99.999% up time and redundant <u>and</u> divergent lines. We simply did not have those things.

Coincidently, many members of the community expressed concern over the lack of affordable high-speed connections available in the area. As a first step towards solving this problem, DCEDC organized and continues to administer the DCEDC Technology Council, a group of IT professionals from leading area companies, local elected officials and other concerned citizens who have been working since 2000 to improve reliability and access to the most up-to-date telecommunications technology for the entire county, and discuss various solutions to the region's current and future needs.

- Invited to participate: school districts; county and municipal governments; local colleges/universities/tech colleges; IT professionals from major employers; public libraries; hospitals/medical centers; chambers of commerce/business associations; incumbent service providers; local service providers; retired telecom executives.
- Mission: "The Door County Technology Council is made up of private and public sector organizations working to provide for the telecommunications infrastructure needs of Door County to improve the competitiveness of its businesses and the quality of life of its residents."
- An informal analysis of Tech Council members identified two main issues:
  - Lack of redundancy
  - High cost for limited broadband services

Council members have taken the lead in educating the community on the importance of broadband telecommunications for future economic development. In May 2002, the Tech Council and DCEDC commissioned and released a study on available telecommunications infrastructure and reported the results at DCEDC's Annual Meeting. The following year, a Technology Needs and Market Study was prepared by Abacus Technologies, which reported that "Sadly, broadband is expensive, scarce or non-existent depending on where in Door County one is located."

- http://www.doorcountybusiness.com/community-development/technology-council/
- http://www.doorcountybusiness.com/why-door-county/community-profile/telecommunications/
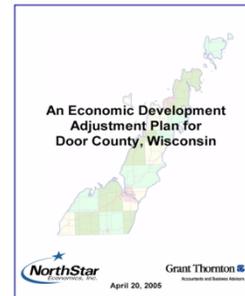
TAKING ACTION

DCEDC and the Tech Council began lobbying for advances in service with local incumbent providers.

- Lobby SBC/Yahoo/AT&T for DSL service in Sturgeon Bay
    - DSL rolled out; companies citied contact from Tech Council for moving the process along faster
- Continued extension of Charter cable services
    - Extended coverage in Sturgeon Bay Industrial Park and Northern Door
- Redundant fiber optic lines to Green Bay
    - Improved backhaul to the web
- Lobbying Verizon to bring DSL to Northern Door
    - Company representatives told us their business model did not see an ROI and they would never bring DSL to Northern Door
- Discussions with several potential new service providers
    - Once we released our studies and started talking about the issue, with researched data showing our needs, new potential service providers came out of the woodwork to talk with us.

DOOR COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADJUSTMENT PLAN

An Economic Development Adjustment Plan for Door County, Wisconsin

NorthStar   Grant Thornton
April 20, 2005

Released in April 2005, the Door County Economic Development Adjustment Plan is a strategic economic plan that serves as a pathway to the future economic growth in the county. The plan presents a comprehensive snapshot of the Door County economy, and suggests seven specific strategies and 75 distinct action steps to pursue the economic goals established by research and community input. The study specifically discusses telecommunications issues, challenges and opportunities in the County.

- *Strategy 6: Address common economic development base needs that…support the…the general Door County business community. Move to a New Economy model that includes and supports…technology infrastructure….*
- Tactic 6A: Support, develop and implement communication technology infrastructure that delivers reliable digital broadband access to the internet and other communication services. Leverage improvements in telecommunication infrastructure by marketing this technology to existing and new businesses.

Action Steps

1. Continue to educate citizens and business owners in the work and findings of the Door County Telecommunications Task Force.
2. Seek local, state and federal support for building telecommunications infrastructure in a rural county.
3. Develop promising and feasible approaches to providing broadband service to Door County. Use opportunities to further public debate and support for telecommunication infrastructure improvements.
4. Develop a marketing plan that leverages the improvement in telecommunications to retain and attract businesses.

http://www.doorcountybusiness.com/community-development/economic-development-adjustment-plan/

IMPROVING TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

NSight/Cellcom

In 2009-10, DCEDC worked closely with Nsight/Cellcom on an application for federal broadband stimulus funds to improve the countywide telecommunications network. Although the grant application was ultimately not funded, the process created opportunity for greater collaboration and support for deployment of a fiber optic telecommunications backbone around the county.

Nsight/Cellcom began building their new fiber optic network in Door County in 2011 and began offering 4G services throughout Door County in 2012. The network will deliver high-speed Internet access, increase capacity for data services and expand the wireless network in the entire county. DCEDC and Cellcom worked with city and county representatives to plot a fiber route into Sturgeon Bay that can provide telecommunication services to high-demand users, including the Sturgeon Bay Industrial Park, the hospital, shipyards and others that could benefit from this ultra high speed- broadband network. The 96-mile fiber line continues up to Gills Rock to connect all Nsight/Cellcom wireless tower sites in Door County. The rest of the county will benefit from enhanced wireless services, including high-speed voice and data services.

Frontier

2010 also saw a new telecommunications service provider for the area. In July, Frontier Communications purchased the service area in Northern Door County from Verizon. In their legacy territories, they had a 98% penetration of DSL to rural customers, versus 63% for Verizon.

Frontier began offering DSL service in Northern Door in late 2011. The first areas served were near the company's exchanges in Jacksonport, Egg Harbor, Baileys Harbor, Sister Bay and Washington Island. Ephraim, Gills Rock and parts of Fish Creek got DSL service in 2012. The original plan was to enter the market with basic speeds, but while building the network, Frontier determined that it would be in the best interest to provide their total high-speed portfolio. Residents therefore have the option of up to 7mg service. Frontier also made significant investments on Washington Island to provide DSL service and fill the void left by the departure of IBEC's "broadband over power lines" service.

NEWWIS/Door County Computer

- Supporting continued infrastructure upgrades and service improvements by local ISP that provides dial-up, Wi-Fi and point-to-point wireless service to most parts of the County.

- The Door County Board of Supervisors voted on February 26, 2013 to increase the maximum height of wireless internet service towers from 75 ft. to 125 ft. According to a letter submitted to the board by NEWWIS/Door County Computer, increasing the height of service towers will allow 95 percent of the peninsula to be covered by wireless internet. DCEDC and others mailed letters to the County Planning Department and Resource Planning Commission in support of the ordinance change.

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND MARKETING

Broadband GIS Coverage Map

- Door County's internet service providers and their service areas can be viewed on the Door County Web Map (http://map.co.door.wi.us/map). The map allows users to find what service providers and data speeds are available at a specific site or property within the county. The map can also show the service coverage area for each of the providers in the county.
- Instructions for using the Web Map can be found at http://map.co.door.wi.us/map/door/help/Metadata/Broadband.pdf
- The telecommunications service provider information on the Door County Web Map is based on data provided to the Wisconsin Public Service Commission by the providers. The map is intended for planning and general use only. Please contact the service provider for site specific service availability.

Broadband Summit –Wednesday, May 8, 2013

Door County has been very fortunate to have some fairly significant telecommunications infrastructure and service upgrades in recent months. DCEDC is holding a Broadband Summit this spring, a day to celebrate and promote the infrastructure and service upgrades in Door County, and debut the new telecommunications layer on the Door County GIS Map.

This will be a day-long event, open to the public, with three roundtable presentations at locations around the County:

- 9:30-11:30am – Crossroads at Big Creek, Sturgeon Bay
- 1:30-3:30pm – Bertschinger Center, Egg Harbor
- 6:30-8:30pm – Sister Bay Fire Station

Tentative Agenda

- Welcome
- DCEDC Tech Council History
- Roundtable discussion of upgrades, improvements
- Telecommunications on Door County GIS Map
- Q&A
- Adjourn

Invited companies:

- Century Link – Kim Valiquette
- Charter – Mike Hill
- County of Door – Tom Haight
- Frontier – Frank Maydak
- NEWWIS/DC Computer – Nate Bell
- Nsight/Cellcom – Nancy Loberger
- US Cellular – William "BJ" Bloom

SUMMARY

Door County has been very fortunate to have some fairly significant telecommunications infrastructure and service upgrades, in no small part due to the concerted and continuous efforts of the members of the DCEDC Technology Council. Because of the work of this volunteer committee, Door County is now positioned to offer excellent telecommunications services to our business community, residents and visitors. It took a great deal of time and patience to get to where we are now.

The effort to identify a problem in your community, find and organize the right people to help address the issues and keep the issues at the forefront of the community conversation take a great deal of energy and persistence. Because of the vital importance of telecommunications for economy development in the 21st century, it is an effort that is well worthwhile. We are now in the position where we can market our telecommunications infrastructure improvements to residents, existing businesses and prospective entrepreneurs as a competitive advantage to doing business in Door County.

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