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Community Building

The Web may be worldwide, but many of its benefits are hyperlocal.

With this issue, the magazine known for almost 10 years as Broadband Properties, and before that as Private & Wireless Broadband, becomes **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES**. We're excited about the name change because it highlights broadband's capacity to strengthen and even create communities – not just virtual communities of interest but real, place-based communities.

In an interview in this issue, Verizon's Tom Nugent says the communications platform Verizon uses in FiOS-enabled buildings can "help make an apartment a longer-term home and help build a community."

That's consistent with my personal experience of using broadband in a large apartment community and, more recently, in a small town. Paradoxically, the same technology that helps me stay in touch with distant relatives and share obscure etymologies in a worldwide word-lovers' forum also lets me know what produce I'll find at my local farmers market and what's showing at the local art gallery.

Because affordable high-speed broadband is a necessity for business, broadband also builds communities by encouraging economic activity (or, at the very least, by keeping employers from leaving).

This issue focuses on municipal fiber networks – which are often launched specifically for purposes of economic development – and features Santa Monica City Net, Palm Coast FiberNET and others that have succeeded at this mission. The Municipal Broadband section reveals their successful strategies.

We've also expanded our online fiber deployment database at www.fiberville.com to include the local benefits of fiber-to-the-home networks. Here's a sampling

of the information we've collected about the community benefits from fiber:

- HomeServe USA expanded its call center in the Chattanooga area "because of the availability of high-quality employees combined with the robust telecommunications and data infrastructure available in the area."
- Media General opened a new printing production facility in Bristol, Tenn., to produce and distribute seven Southwest Virginia newspapers. Jim Hyatt, Media General's regional VP and publisher, said high-speed data transfer and reliable fiber optics were the main reasons for locating the facility there.
- Danville (Va.) Dental Associates recently opened its fourth office and says the nDanville network made it possible. Dr. Albert Payne said the company "wouldn't go out there if the network wasn't available for us. You want to have access to all the charts from all the different locations at one time."
- The State of the City report for Monmouth, Ore., said the city has been judged "cool" by big-city and national media: "One of the biggest 'coolness' factors turns out to be the availability of broadband Internet and other modern telecom services. ... Key [to business] is the availability of a broadband connection so that they can access their markets."

Write and let me know how your community is benefiting from broadband.

Masha Zager

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