CURRY COUNTY TELECOMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIC PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Telecommunications is the central nervous system of the American economy. It has revolutionized virtually every aspect of our lives and every industry, from education and health care to banking and finance. To remain competitive in the world Curry County businesses, institutions and residents must have available to them the most advanced telecommunications technologies and services AND the knowledge of how to use them.

We present this Telecommunications Strategic Plan to Curry County with the understanding the work has just begun and that we need to continue our efforts together. Fostering development of a 21st century knowledge-based economy means building on our existing strengths while adding additional diversification to the economy. Successful implementation of the recommendations depends on continuing community participation, cooperation and collaboration.

Economic diversification is the cornerstone of a healthy, growing 21st century information age county. By taking full advantage of telecommunications, Curry County is poised with the opportunity to become a world-class destination for a wide variety of businesses, healthcare, retirees and tourism.

Curry and surrounding counties are examples of what has been termed "the rural challenge". There is a growing awareness of the barrier to economic and quality of life growth presented through the lack of access to advanced telecommunications services (i.e., broadband). There is a growing understanding of the role of telecommunications and what it takes to foster the changes necessary to meet growing demands of the region.

Changes in the area's economy and demographics are such that now we can bring market opportunities to the attention of other providers and private sector investors. One needs look no farther than the recent Charter announcement for an example. While it took the better part of a couple of years of behind the scenes negotiations and encouragement, the result we expect by late 2007 is nothing less than removing the cork from the bottle that has been containing the genie of economic development hoped for by many in the county.

Additionally, we need to continue to drive the discussion on route redundancy to a new level of awareness. Collaboration with other regional players is required. This is underway and growing.

Education and workforce preparation is underway and deserves to be bolstered and supported by the community to meet increasing demands of the 21st century digital economy. This includes tourism and new ways to use technology.

Across the county we see "IT using" on a fairly regular basis with impacts on daily tasks. "IT using" includes use of email and web browsing to raise the quality and lower the costs of gathering market intelligence and communicating with suppliers and customers.

There is considerable opportunity to further expand the use of IT in the county, to integrate it more fully into daily operations and lives. "It enhancing" includes developing and integrating more complex "e-business" applications, such as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), that can enable whole new business processes and models, such as automated online supply chain management and online sales into geographically

distant markets. This is the next level of IT use and the level at which we see the greatest benefits to an economy.

Successful integration into the 21st century economy depends on ubiquitous broadband along with widespread knowledge of how to take full advantage of the resource. Thus the criticality of the role played by the workforce development agencies and education in providing 21st digital age education and continuous learning opportunities.

Three broad goals are recommended (Activities, Tasks and Responsible Party are spelled out in the body of the report).

Goal 1 –Curry County's Telecommunication Services Match 21st Century Demands

Strategy

Encourage and support the continued growth of the Curry County telecommunications infrastructure so that employees can be as efficient as possible, healthcare providers can provide the highest levels of care for patients, businesses and all organizations can be competitive as they see fit in the global economy, and residents can have every access to education, information and services.

- Activity 1.1 Establish a Standing Information Technology Advisory Committee
- Activity 1.2 Support and Facilitate Availability of Broadband
- Activity 1.3 Support and Facilitate Availability of Quality Cellular Phone Service
- Activity 1.4 Establish ordinances for broadband conduit construction
- Activity 1.5 Support and Facilitate Regional Route Redundancy
- Activity 1.6 Establish a regional exchange point
- Activity 1.7 Identify funding to support continued planning efforts

Goal 2 -- Curry County's Workforce Is 21st Century Ready

Strategy

Ensure that all Curry County workers have the opportunity to equip themselves with the necessary tools to succeed in their careers and in whatever field they choose in this new and dynamic global digital economy. Encourage entrepreneurship, provide for life-long learning and promote growth of existing businesses. Build on existing programs and relationships.

- Activity 2.1 Ensure development of a 21st Century Workforce
- Activity 2.2 Promote and Support Small Business Growth
- Activity 2.3 Develop Programs to Ensure Adequate Supply of Trades Workforce
- Activity 2.4 Evaluate the Potential for Community Development Resource Centers

Goal 3 -- Curry County Is A Full Participant in the 21st Century Economy

Strategy

A knowledge-based digital economy will be a significant component of the 21st century economy and serve as an added dimension for promoting economic opportunities in Curry County.

- Activity 3.1 Promote Curry County's Telecommunication Assets
- Activity 3.2 Include 21st Century Factors In Economic Development Policy
- Activity 3.3 Continue the Regional Approach to Economic Development
- Activity 3.4 Develop an "Independent Living" Pilot Project
- Activity 3.5 Promote Increased Telework/Telecommuting Opportunities
- Activity 3.6 Promote expanded use of telehealth/telemedicine technologies

Researching and developing this set of recommendations was a great opportunity to discover the positive attributes of Curry County, especially its growing telecommunications infrastructure and service offerings. It was exciting to see the Charter announcement and to project the impact from this greatly expanded broadband capacity. More exciting is the obvious energy and dynamism of a number of the residents and their sincere interest in moving Curry County into the 21st century. Probably one of the most remarkable findings is the degree to which county residents are willing to pitch in and work together. Curry County has the potential for a great future.

Achieving the goals identified in this Telecommunications Strategic Plan will result in positive impacts to the economic climate and will also positively impact the quality of life for residents.

We may not be able to predict the future but we sure can prepare for it.

NOTE: The following pages contain the details of the approved strategic plan. The set of assessment documents and other background materials leading to this set of goals and actions can be found at www.callineb.com/documents.htm .

Mission Statement – "Curry County is connected to the 21st century… *and the world knows it!"*

Curry County is advancing rapidly into the 21st century and aggressively looking towards a high-tech future. Economic Development means three things: attracting new businesses, retaining existing business and nurturing entrepreneurial enterprises that will provide good family wage jobs. Curry's location, climate and continually growing state of the art telecommunications make Curry County an ideal location for information technology enhanced businesses.

Vision Statement – 2010 and beyond

Vision statements convey a picture of "what is to be". What follows is one such picture of the future for Curry County residents.

Knowledgeable usage of IT and advanced telecommunication technologies spur economic development and enhance the quality of life of all county residents. Government, businesses, healthcare, not for profits and education all benefit from access to a reasonably priced, robust telecommunications infrastructure that provides maximum flexibility, growth and expandability.

The Curry County Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC) monitors and reports annually to the Commissioners on the status of telecommunication infrastructure and usage. The ITAC is composed of volunteers from a variety of sectors and interests in the county and serves as a liaison between countywide telecommunication stakeholders and service providers, and, through regular community forums, fosters an environment of open communication, cooperation and collaboration with the providers of communications services, ensuring that the area's needs are being adequately communicated and serviced. On-going community forums throughout the county educate and promote the use of a variety of technologies. At these public meetings input received from attendees is compiled by the ITAC and shared at least annually with business, education, county and city government, and service providers.

Businesses thrive in Curry County due to our unique mix of traditional and technical occupations. Route redundant telecommunications infrastructure attracts high technology using firms to the area. Due to the availability and knowledge of how to use advanced telecommunications services even small businesses find it easy to compete in the global market. All businesses meet and exceed their goals for production and expansion. Family wage jobs, and even higher wage jobs, are plentiful. Residents' income will be such that home ownership is readily attainable.

Residents go on line to obtain local, state and federal government services; they get building permits, pay traffic fines, access property information and pay their taxes. The list of services changes periodically because county and city governments, through surveys, on-line town meetings and other well-publicized programs, seek continuing feedback from the people who live here. Economic

development partners jointly are responsible for the ongoing creation and maintenance of a well-published technology profile for the county. These groups actively seek funding through a series of grants and entrepreneurial activities. These funding sources ensure sustainable access to on-line information in public areas; for example, in schools after hours, in public areas of Curry County communities.

Residents benefit from access to education from the state-of-the-art facilities in the county. All education facilities provide targeted 21st century digital economy workforce development programs. Development offices work closely with all segments of business, healthcare, not for profits and government to develop workforce goals and set priorities. Continuing interaction among education, businesses, not for profits, healthcare, government groups, and residents makes it easy to determine appropriate training programs and to establish a technically adept workforce. High schools, the community colleges, and education centers provide distance education (DE) opportunities from resources throughout Oregon, the US, and the world. Through DE students of all ages acquire advanced training or degrees where they live and where they work. That workforce is the cornerstone of the county's economy as it includes the best and the brightest of the county's young people. Family members are re-united as they return to their home county to participate and benefit from the opportunities in our growing 21st century economy. They bring their families and skills back to the area because of the unsurpassed quality of life and opportunities for career advancement.

All of the county's healthcare service providers are online and participate as members of a community medical network. Telehealth services are available throughout the county; reaching into the most remote areas of the county, extending the reach of providers for consultations, diagnostics, and emergency services. Patient education and monitoring is everywhere in the county, including in the home. Patients no longer have to drive long distances for pre-surgery education and can obtain quality information to assist them with management of their health. Through remote monitoring and patient interactions residents are afforded the opportunity to remain in their homes for longer periods of time as they age, saving tax payers significant dollars while providing a high quality of life for the residents and providing a new category of employment.

Representatives from the ITAC work with Curry County as well as with area providers to develop regional awareness and approaches for advanced telecommunications services in region.

Goal 1 -- Curry County's Telecommunication Services Match 21st Century Demands

Strategy

Encourage and support the continued growth of the Curry County telecommunications infrastructure so that employees can be as efficient as possible, healthcare providers can provide the highest levels of care for patients, businesses and all organizations can be competitive as they see fit in the global economy, and residents can have every access to education, information and services.

<u>Activity 1.1 Establish a Standing Information Technology Advisory Committee</u>

Continuity and sustainability of planning activities would be well served through the establishment of a standing Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC). The largely volunteer group would be populated by representation from both the urban and rural areas of the county as well as from the various sectors of our economy. The ITAC would be charged with implementing, upgrading and monitoring progress of the Strategic Plan.

The ITAC will meet at least quarterly to monitor and make recommendations on countywide telecommunication and technology activities, reporting to the county commissioners on at least an annual basis. Topics would include, but are not limited to:

- Route redundancy
- Broadband services and deployment
- Cellular phone service
- Telephone service and use of lifeline opportunities
- Use of technologies in support of a 21st Century Digital Economy
- Governmental Web sites – *"online not in line"*

<u>Tasks:</u>

1.1.1   Create a standing advisory committee composed of the Economic development Director as the chairperson and 8 – 12 volunteers from throughout the county. Members are concerned with the full range of telecommunications services provisioning and usage. The committee chair will present its findings to the public and regional planning agencies on an annual basis.

- The chairperson will be responsible for managing the meetings, coordinating development of the annual report, conveying committee concerns and recommendations to the county commissioners.
- Meet at least quarterly.
- All meetings will be conducted in accordance with Oregon's Public meeting statutes.
- The ITAC chair would convey the annual report in a public meeting.
- At a minimum the report will address the status and plans for broadband, route redundancy, cellular phone and usage of telecommunications in the county.

<u>When:</u> Q3 2007 - Formation and organization of the volunteer committee.
<u>Who:</u> Economic Development Director with backing of the County Commissioners

<u>Activity 1.2 Support and Facilitate Availability of Broadband</u>

Curry County has benefited from a recent private sector investment in advanced telecommunications technology in the region. Yet the rapidly escalating need for even more availability of bandwidth due to emerging application demands and remaining underserved areas means our work is not done. This is especially true as one heads north of Gold Beach or away from the 101 corridor.

Tasks:

1.2.1 Establish a broadband goal stating that 100% of all county residents who want it will have access to broadband services by 2010. This non-binding leadership statement from the County Commissioners is a step toward quantifying the effort, puts in place a metric and sets a tone for continued investment and growth of the telecommunications infrastructure in the county.

The ITAC will utilize this Strategic Plan as a beginning resource to direct, monitor and promote further expansion of broadband services to meet the goal. The ITAC will determine the course of action to be pursued based on a majority vote of the committee members. These efforts will include:

- Identification of projects that accelerate broadband in rural areas.
- Seek use of broadband aggregation in areas not served
- Encourage public-private partnerships
- Identify funding sources
- Evaluation of tax credits or other incentives
- Promote provider competition
- Broadband usage education

When: On going with ITAC findings reported in the annual report to the Commissioners and to each of the broadband providers in the region. Targeted completion for the approval of the coverage goal is Q1, 2008.
Who: ITAC

Activity 1.3 Support and Facilitate Availability of Quality Cellular Phone Service

Cellular phone reception is a critical for public safety and is conducive to supporting tourism and other businesses. Today there are a number of well-traveled areas, and less well-traveled areas, in the county where cellular phone service is unavailable.

Tasks:

1.3.1 Establish a cellular services goal of 100% coverage on the major travel corridors by 2010. These routes would include the highways 101 and 199 as well other major travel corridors in the county. Cellular communication is critical for economic factors (e.g., tourism) and for emergency response. This non-binding leadership statement from the County Commissioners is a step toward quantifying the effort puts in place a metric and sets a tone for continued investment and growth of the cellular communications infrastructure in the county.

The ITAC will utilize this Strategic Plan as a beginning resource to direct, monitor and promote further expansion of cellular services to meet the goal. Efforts will include:

- Documentation of areas of "dropped" coverage
- Monitor cell tower siting
- Encourage tower "stealthing"

- Collocation on existing structures, especially on state, county or municipal structures
- Fast track permitting for structures
- Promote use of shared facilities agreements among cellular providers to reduce antenna proliferation and increase coverage.

When: On going with ITAC findings reported in the annual report to the Commissioners and to each of the cellular providers in the region. Targeted completion for the approval of the coverage goal is Q1, 2008.

Who: ITAC

Activity 1.4 Establish ordinances for broadband conduit construction

Work with all jurisdictions to establish a common set of ordinances for broadband conduit placement.

Tasks:

1.4.1 Adopt county and municipal ordinances to coordinate and require placement of conduit whenever roads are dug up or new commercial or residential site development occurs. Access to that conduit by telecommunications companies who provide broadband will be encouraged and offered at very low or no cost to the telecommunication provider.

When: Targeted completion for the ordinances goal is Q1, 2008.

Who: County Commissioners and City Councils

Activity 1.5 Support and Facilitate Regional Route Redundancy

Uninterrupted telecommunications through route redundancy (AKA: route diversity) is a critical requirement for 24 x 7 commercial activity, education, healthcare, access to government and public safety.

- Identify entities requiring route redundancy
- Aggregate demand and create partnerships
- Develop a detailed route redundancy engineering and business plan

1.5.1 Continue regional planning efforts to establish route redundancy. Work with regional public and private sector individuals and groups to identify routes, build partnerships, develop business plans and identify funding. Explore the alternatives highlighted in this Plan. This is a difficult and complex task that requires considerable persistence.

When: On going with ITAC findings reported in the annual report to the Commissioners and to each of the communications providers in the region. Targeted completion for route redundancy planning completion is Q2, 2009.

Who: ITAC

Activity 1.6 Establish a regional exchange point

The best way to both reduce costs and improve network service quality is to exchange local data traffic locally. Here we define "locally" as the region of Curry, Coos, Del Norte, and Humboldt counties. This activity assumes the establishment of regional route redundancy.

Tasks:

1.6.1   Work with regional providers to establish a carrier neutral exchange point. Connecting local traffic locally improves the quality of those transmissions by reducing the transmission delay time, reducing the number of dropped data packets and reducing the network jitter (variable arrival time of data packets). It also reduces the need for expensive bandwidth to send that traffic to a distant location, only to have it sent back to a nearby location. In telecommunications, as in other industries, improving quality usually decreases costs, making it a win-win proposition. This task can build off the route redundancy efforts.

> When: Q1, 2009 through Q1, 2010.
> Who: ITAC

Activity 1.7 Identify funding to support continued planning efforts

Telecommunication planning efforts are very complex, extremely time-consuming and of absolute criticality to Curry County. Planning and implementation activities for this topic may very well be among the highest priorities for economic development for the region. Substantial work has now occurred over the past year with significant efforts ahead. Many relationships have been built and substantial knowledge has been accrued. Continuity and sustainability of these activities is crucial. Any loss of momentum will be a set back to continued progress.

Considerable additional work remains on these topics:

- Route redundancy – next level of detailed examination of routes
- Last Mile ("first mile") provision of broadband, especially to areas north of Gold Beach
- Competition – attracting other providers to the area
- Demand side development – education, workforce development, understanding how to fully exploit the capabilities of broadband.

Tasks:

1.7.1   Identify and lock in funding for these efforts for the next two years.

> When: Q3, 2007
> Who: Curry County Economic Development

Goal 2 -- Curry County's Workforce Is 21st Century Ready

Strategy

Ensure that all Curry County workers have the opportunity to equip themselves with the necessary tools to succeed in their careers and in whatever field they choose in this new and dynamic global digital economy. Encourage entrepreneurship, provide for life-long learning and promote growth of existing businesses. Build on existing programs and relationships.

Activity 2.1 Ensure development of a 21st Century Workforce

During the transition from the Old Economy to the 21st century digital economy (also referred to as the New Information Economy or the Knowledge Economy), the fate of specific industrial sectors and particular companies is uncertain. However, any status report on the American economy would reveal that there is an ever-growing need for a workforce that is skilled, knowledgeable, and adaptable to a rapidly changing global landscape. 21st century workforce preparation requires strong academics, thinking, reasoning, and teamwork skills, and proficiency in using technology. Lifelong learning is now also the "new normal".

Tasks:

2.1.1   Deliver a coordinated 21st Century Literacy Readiness campaign with outreach to all county youth -- develop where none exist and strengthen where they do exist.

- Foster an understanding of the importance of increasing the acquisition of critical IT skills and knowledge needed to succeed in today's workplace. Include: classroom speakers, field/trips/business tours, career interest interviews, job shadows, mock employment interviews, mentors, career fairs/career days and other similar activities.
- Promote and provide digital economy career pathway information and resources for adults and youth.
- Use information available from the Oregon Labor Market Information System (http://www.qualityinfo.org) as a tool to understand IT-related occupation opportunities for the area.
- Use public service announcements on radio and TV as well as Web sites and print media.

When: Commence Q2, 2008 and on going
Who: ITAC (as facilitator) in conjunction with k-12 educators, regional workforce development groups and regional businesses.

2.1.2   Promote expanded opportunities for continuous learning using online offerings (distance education), onsite delivery and use of videoconferencing.

When: Q4, 2007 and On going
Who: ITAC and partners

Activity 2.2 Promote and Support Small Business Growth

Small businesses are the heart and soul of the Curry County economic engine.

Tasks:

2.2.1   Widen the target population for entrepreneurship programs that emphasize use of digital technologies and telecommunications to attract the participation of women, the young and minorities. Coordinate efforts with SOCC and workforce development groups. Use public service announcements on radio and TV as well as Web sites and print media. Explore funding opportunities through workforce initiative grants.

When: Q4, 2007 and On going
Who: ITAC and partners

2.2.2   Establish a freestanding Innovation and Entrepreneurship Institute. (see Activity 2.4)

- Increase opportunities for county residents to create their own jobs and businesses sing broadband capabilities.
- Bring special attention to the role digital and telecommunications technology brings.
- Examine and report on the role the k-12 education system could play in developing innovation and entrepreneurial skills and attitudes
- Facilitate increased networking among firms in order to foster a culture of mutual cooperation and risk-taking.
- Maximize use of the Internet/Web sites [note: excellent models for use of the web exist – e.g., www.thebeehive.org].

When: Q1, 2008 and on going
Who: ITAC and partners

2.2.3   Review and simplify registration procedures required to create a broadband-based business. Ensure that firms are able to open as quickly and painlessly as possible.

When: Q1, 2008 and on going
Who: ITAC and partners

Activity 2.3 Develop Programs to Ensure Adequate Supply of Trades Workforce

Even as we look to add the absolutely critical dimensions of the 21st Century Digital Economy to our county and region, there will continue to be a large demand for qualified trades persons. No economy can exist without these qualified members of the workforce.

Tasks:

2.3.1   Expand online 24 x 7 course offerings in support of the trades and support a seamless transition for high school students to achieve associate degrees or certifications. The didactic portion of many work skills programs can be offered via online and distance education delivery mechanisms. Work with the workforce development groups, k-12 and

SOCC to identify and evaluate expansion of online education and support for these areas of rapidly growing employment opportunities (partial listing):

- Advanced Electronics Technology (Avionics)

- Refrigeration & Major Appliance Service Technology
- Aircraft Mechanic
- Applied Service Management
- Auto Parts & Warehousing
- Building Construction Technician
- Building Maintenance and Management
- Carpentry
- Commercial Truck Driving
- Certified Automotive Technician
- Certified Truck & Diesel Technician

- Commercial and Residential Heating, Ventilation, & Air Conditioning (HVAC)
- Construction - Home Remodeling and Repair
- Electrician
- Electronic Systems Technician
- Locksmith Training
- Marine & Watercraft Mechanic
- Maritime Education

- Motorcycle Technician
- Plumbing Technology
- Small Engine Repair
- Transport Refrigeration & Air Conditioning

When: Q3, 2008 and on going
Who: ITAC, chambers of commerce, Workforce and Job Councils, k-12 and higher education.

Activity 2.4 Evaluate the Potential for Community Development Resource Centers

A Community Development Resource Center is a community service, social action, and/or educational facility where computers, related communications technologies, education programs and business mentoring are available to people. Each CDRC has its own unique qualities, yet all share a commitment to using technology, promoting access to education and providing business development support with a belief that a CDRC can be a means for participants to increase their self-sufficiency. This could be especially critical for the more rural communities of the county. (see Task 2.2.2)

Tasks:

2.4.1   Support the development of a full range of business incubator facilities from early initial concept to production and graduation. These include "incubation in place" wherein existing businesses are supported in creating new business lines. Incentives will include grants, low interest loans, relationships with research institutions and general business services.

When: Q1, 2008 and on going
Who: ITAC and partners

Goal 3 -- Curry County Is A Full Participant in the 21st Century Economy

Strategy

A knowledge-based digital economy will be a significant component of the 21st century economy and serve as an added dimension for promoting economic opportunities in Curry County.

Activity 3.1 Promote Curry County's Telecommunication Assets

Let the world know about Curry's digital readiness, especially broadband capabilities. Actively engage in a public awareness campaign to tout the variety and depth of telecommunication services available in the county.

Tasks:

3.1.1   Develop a Curry digital communities marketing campaign to promote Curry County as a place to do business in the 21st Century.

- Create promotional materials touting the county's array of telecommunications capabilities and 21st century preparedness for inclusion in marketing campaigns, presentation on Web sites, etc.
- Explore use of volunteer copywriters, students, etc.
- Explore opportunities in existing budgets (i.e., businesses, education, chambers of commerce, etc.) and/or seek economic development related grants.
- Expand the county Web site to become a one-stop location for the area that includes original content as well as links to other existing online resources in the county. Included here would be current statistics profiling the county, especially its telecommunications assets.

When: Q2, 2008 and on going
Who: Economic Development in conjunction with the ITAC and its partners

Activity 3.2 Include 21st Century Factors In Economic Development Policy

Globalization of markets for goods, services, capital, and labor accelerated in the 1990s and proved to be the undoing of both industrial recruiting and cost cutting. Regions were forced to move away from old industries and to search for new market opportunities, thereby ushering in our current era of global competitiveness. This represents a fundamental change from previous eras. This shift requires a workforce with 21st century knowledge-based digital skills and the opportunity for continuous learning to keep pace with the demand rapidly evolving skill sets. Curry County not only needs to focus on what happens at home but must also understand and prepare for its role in the global economy.

Tasks:

3.2.1   Integrate 21st century economic development policies into existing approaches. Such policies need to foster continual increased diversification of our economy and need to go beyond attracting and fostering light manufacturing, an area of significant risk for outsourcing today and in the foreseeable future, and tourism.

When: Q1, 2008 and ongoing
Who: Economic Development in conjunction with the ITAC and its partners

Activity 3.3 Continue the Regional Approach to Economic Development

While each community in the region has unique challenges and opportunities, industries, transportation, land uses, natural resources, and other key elements of a healthy economy are regional in scope. Communities and the private sector need to cooperate to create regional wealth in a manner that promotes a coherent collaboration, respecting local character and identity.

Tasks:

3.3.1   Support and promote regional economic development activities. Work closely with Del Norte County in California. Add increased awareness of the need to further diversify the economy by adding increased knowledge-based businesses to ensure our participation in the global knowledge-based digital economy.

When: Q3, 2007 and ongoing
Who: Economic Development in conjunction with the ITAC and its partners

Activity 3.4 Develop an "Independent Living" Pilot Project

A countywide task force will plan for meeting the housing and home healthcare needs of low-income seniors and people with disabilities by first developing a pilot project. This may be a separate group from the ITAC but possibly with some overlapping membership. The group would have representatives from a variety of sectors -- seniors and persons with disabilities, architects, contractors, healthcare, financial services, housing administration and other parties required for such a collaborative effort.

New technology solutions offer great promise to improve quality of care while reducing healthcare costs. It is time now for technology to transform the experience of aging as well as improving the lives of those persons with disabilities. This project would bring together builders, information technology workers, healthcare providers and other components required to produce the pilot project. The potential exists to improve the quality of lives, to save taxpayers money, and to create new opportunities for employment for seniors and persons with disabilities. It's also a great way to demonstrate our county's capabilities, both in telecommunications infrastructure and our ability to collaborate.

Tasks:

3.4.1   Develop a Project Independence pilot project.

- Review currently available technologies and identify infrastructure deficits that act as barriers to effective technology integration into housing for seniors and people with disabilities. Includes a review of available technology for enhancement of affordable housing and supports.
- Conduct a Needs and Awareness Survey to provide a picture of assistive technology awareness, experience, and barriers to use among seniors and people with disabilities.

This information will help shape training activities, demonstration projects, and recommendations for systems change.

- Determine the extent to which current policies address assistive technology.
- Identify key policies that may be modified to effectively expand the integration of assistive technology.
- Develop a plan to promote and provide assistive technologies.
- Oversee implementation of recommended infrastructure improvements and demonstration projects, and develop information resources and training materials for consumers, housing developers, case managers, families, contractors and others.

When: Commence planning by Q1, 2008 with targeted completion of a pilot project by Q1, 2009.

Who: An alliance of concerned parties – ITAC, Sutter, Curry General, seniors and disabled services groups, and others as yet to be named (for example, local construction entities).

Activity 3.5 Promote Increased Telework/Telecommuting Opportunities

Promote use of telecommunications as a means to reduce transportation impacts, which can improve air quality, personal convenience and reduce dependency on non-renewable resources. Many of these jobs will come from out of the area.

Tasks:

3.5.1   Promote telecommuting to businesses and institutions in and out of the county as a way to add employment opportunities, save our air, fuel and commute time. Possibilities include educational seminars on how to do it, PSAs on radio and TV, etc. Successful implementation will bring additional dollars into the economy.

When: Q1, 2008 and on going
Who: ITAC and partners

Activity 3.6 Promote expanded use of telehealth/telemedicine technologies

Telehealth is "the practice of healthcare delivery using telecommunications technology including but not limited to diagnosis, consultation, treatment, transfer of medical data, education, dissemination of public health alerts and/or emergency updates". Telemedicine is "the use of telecommunications technology to deliver clinical diagnosis, services and patient consultation".

Telehealth technologies enable home health providers to redefine patient treatment plans, as they are able to increase patient visits due to elimination of a significant percentage of travel to patients' homes. Rural patients can now have access to specialists.

Spending on health care is an especially significant portion of any economy, especially rural economies. The more of those dollars that can be kept locally the better off the local economy will be.

<u>Tasks</u>

<u>3.6.1</u> Work with local providers to encourage and support expanded use of telehealth technologies. Communities can support acquisition of funds (grants and other sources) and provide other support (i.e., promotion). Availability of these modern services is a value-add for economic development activities. Here there's also an opportunity to become a service provider to others living out of the area by encouraging specialists to move to the area to operate consultation services serving outside the area.

<u>When:</u> Q1, 2008 and on going
<u>Who:</u>   ITAC and partners, especially regional hospitals and clinics