

Broadband Update for North Carolina's Northeast

From the Outer Banks Chamber Newsletter

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MCNC and Golden Leaf announced on Thursday an ambitious \$111 Million project to bring broadband to 69 underserved counties in North Carolina including 17 in the northeast. The intent is to provide a fiber trunk to anchor institutions like schools, universities, libraries and other public organizations while providing the infrastructure for business growth.

Golden Leaf awarded \$24 Million of the \$33 Million of in kind dollars while \$78 million is being sought from the Federal stimulus resources under the Broadband Technologies Opportunities Program (BTOP). MCNC, a non-profit in Research Triangle Park partnered with Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise at UNC-Chapel Hill to assemble the application and manage the project.

There were many partners in this project from the Governor and the University System to more regional organizations like Elizabeth City State University, Coastal Studies Institute, College of the Albemarle and the Northeast Commission.

Create the Future Initiative, a non-profit partner of the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce, played a part as well. Their Technologies Committee Chair, John Hughes, was instrumental in finding and securing a \$4.5 million in-kind contribution for the project. Having worked with the Albemarle Pamlico Economic Development Corporation (APEC) he recognized that they still had ownership of conduit that had been installed with the gas pipelines in parts of the Northeast. With the help of the Northeast Commission, among others, this asset became a major factor in insuring the broadband project could become a reality in the extreme Northeast.

“There were times where simple math was going to keep the Northeast from being a part of this project, but each time Joe Freddoso of MCNC was able to find the right resources and partners to keep our community in the loop,” said Paul Tine, Chairman of the Create the Future Initiative.

More can be heard about the BTOP submission and how the new economy is affecting the Northeast on 8:30 am – 1:00 pm, Thursday, April 15, 2010 as College of the Albemarle, The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce and Create the Future Initiative host the community conversation entitled “Change Is Here” as part of the Land of Beginnings Festival. Joe Freddoso of MCNC will be one of the key speakers as he shares the story of MCNC and how it has been able to creatively drive innovation in North Carolina.

“Create the future: Change is Here” is a free program but pre-registration is required. The invitation can be downloaded at www.outerbankschamber.com/cfi.pdf For more information and to register please contact COA at (252) 473-2264 Ext 0.