



Tennessee becomes more connected

<http://www.theknoxvillejournal.com/inside/pages/education/Tennessee-becomes-more-connected.html>

12/29/08

Connected Tennessee announced the release of the third edition of Tennessee's Technology Trends — the State of Tennessee's first comprehensive technology survey.

The two-part assessment highlights use and impact of computers, the Internet and broadband technology among Tennessee residents and businesses.

The key findings of the report indicate that two of the focal points of the Connected Tennessee mission, the state's rural areas and low-income families with children, have experienced a major surge in technology adoption over the past year.

Tennessee's low-income families with children, a group specifically targeted by Connected Tennessee's Computers 4 Kids (C4K) program, experienced a massive 124 percent growth in broadband adoption over the past year.

"Connected Tennessee's Computers 4 Kids program is impacting the lives of Tennessee children by placing technology in the hands of deserving young people who would not otherwise have this access," said Gov. Phil Bredesen.

"It's gratifying to know that the people involved with this program are starting to turn to technology for their day-to-day needs. These findings prove that the premise of this program — placing technology in the hands of those that really need it — is working."

Computers 4 Kids is an innovative initiative designed to positively impact the future of citizens in need in Tennessee by awarding computers to kids and families facing economic challenges, in the foster care system or struggling with behavioral disorders and other issues.

Working with the Department of Children's Services and the Department of Human Services, C4K has awarded well over 1,000 computers to children and families in need across Tennessee over the past year.

Another focus point of the Connected Tennessee mission is expanding the presence of technology among the state's rural areas.

Connected Tennessee's eCommunity Strategies Leadership Teams have been established in nearly all of Tennessee's rural counties, helping those underserved areas of the state see a 30 percent growth in broadband adoption since last January.

"The ability to adopt and disseminate technology is a key factor in achieving both sustainable economic growth and a high quality of life in our communities," said Matt Kisber, Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development.

"The increasing availability of broadband Internet access is a telling indicator of our state's progress in these fundamental areas."

The survey also reveals that Tennesseans are utilizing Internet applications at a much higher rate than in the past:

- 210 percent growth in online healthcare interaction
- 153 percent growth in interacting with state government online
- 107 percent growth in interacting with local government online

"This survey shows that we are starting to see a significant impact in the areas we have identified as counties that are ripe for technology advancement," says Connected Tennessee's Executive Director, Michael Ramage.

"Connected Tennessee's eCommunity Leadership Teams are on the ground in Tennessee's rural counties, raising awareness about the need for broadband technology and building a demand that wasn't there before. It is rewarding to realize that we are making a real difference in Tennessee's technology landscape."

The complete findings of Tennessee's Technology Trends 2008 can be downloaded from Connected Tennessee's Web site at www.connectedtennessee.org.