

## DRAFT

### Wired For Success

#### Broadband: Streamlining Information Exchange

In the October 16, 2005 issue of *Our Time Press*, this column heralded Broadband Over Power Lines (BPL) deployment in Manassas, VA. The technology company behind it is Dr. Joseph Fergus' COMTek. New York City, though slower to implement, is no less hot to do the same. After all, staying a world city requires continuous reinvention of self.

City Councilwoman Gale Brewer chairs the City Council Committee on Technology in Government. Councilwoman Brewer is focused and determined in making e-government a reality for New York. Her office recently emailed a major advance in the e-government agenda. Her office explains that after nearly four years of hard work, briefings, meetings and hearings, the New York City Council passed Int. No. 625-A by a vote of 47-0. Int. No. 625-A calls for the creation of a public broadband advisory committee that is comprised of the Mayor and City Council appointees. This committee is responsible for issuing an annual report at the end of each calendar year on the state of broadband in the city. The point being to ascertain what New York City can do to meet the broadband needs of small business, residents, and nonprofit groups. This spells leveling the playing field for commerce, service provision and civil society. Mayor Michael Bloomberg did sign the resolution on December 29, 2005 in City Hall's Blue Room.

Innovations of the Internet have made great impact on the nonprofit and government sectors in the past three years. One example is streaming media technology. Previously, nonprofits had to commit to either reading the *Federal Register* to learn of Notices of Funds Availability for their social cause and attend bidders conferences in spaces that can host hundreds of people. It was arduous to listen to briefings on the funding opportunities and to pose questions. The federal government revamped the process by scheduling videoconferences. Using email and postal mail, a nonprofit receives a schedule of dates and times for a variety of programs administered by federal agencies. The nonprofit need only have a web-enabled PC and a digital media playing device such as MS *Media Player* or *RealPlayer*. Bandwidth determines how quickly downloads complete and the quality of audio and graphics. The added benefit is that these videoconferences are, then, archived so that someone may view it at anytime of the day. This means the bidders conference may be rewound, paused or stopped. The Federal government has gone so far as to establish an e-government funding initiative. Groups seeking funding visit [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) to search for appropriate funders and complete an extensive application online. Submitting an application requires registration with the Central Contracting Registry at [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov).

Other agencies see the benefit of streaming media and conduct bidders conferences and technical assistance online. Examples include the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the National Science Foundation. OJJDP has a Telecommunication Assistance Project, which is facilitated by satellite broadcast. One of the archived videoconferences is about teen prostitution. Nonprofits and public agencies in New York, Houston and Washington, DC were able to describe the crisis of teen prostitution in their cities and strategies for combating it. Speakers were located in

their respective towns during the initial broadcast. Interviews were supported with online resources and street addresses for viewers to use.

The National Science Foundation facilitated applying for Information Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers (ITEST) through the use of a resource-rich website and a videoconference. Interested parties were directed to register online. The audience received a conference code and password. If the audience wanted to pose a question during the conference, a telephone number had to be dialed in advance of the broadcast and at a particular point in the conference; a viewer could pose questions to get clarity on the program. Callers were placed on a queue based on the order in which one called in. The name of the caller was said and then, the caller was prompted to speak. Conference speakers received questions from around the nation. How's that for effective information transference?

Private organizations see the power of online community-building and are scheduling videoconferences. There is a National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day webcast scheduled for January 31, 2006, from 3:00 to 5:00 PM. **Please read the February 15, 2006 Our Time Press to learn how your group may hold a videoconference.**

### **Bits and Bytes**

Is your house of worship the pillar and resource for the community? Do you find schedule conflicts keep members or congregation away from mass sometimes? The solution to staying in touch is Church TV. Church TV is an online service for setting up a website for your house of worship. Church TV states, " People can view your site from anywhere on Earth. Parishioners are kept up-to-date on latest news." Church TV gives the option of webcasting where proceedings are seen live as it happens or on-demand. This same technology may be downloaded onto a cellular phone or Ipod. This results in as close to high interactivity as being in the house. To learn more about Church TV, visit [www.church.tv](http://www.church.tv).

If your sense of adventure has you on planes, trains, buses and trucks in exotic locales, keep the adventure stoked by visiting Globe Trekker TV. Globe Trekker TV is the companion website for the PBS series, Globe Trekker. Do you love the music featured in the television program? The website provides the choice of online purchase of music CDs or downloading songs. There are even screen savers of photo shots from around the globe. The website, [www.globetrekkertv.com](http://www.globetrekkertv.com) serves as a travel guide, complete with immunization, visa requirement, history and culture for each included travel destination. The great thing about Globe Trekker is that it shows every country has a bit of the exotic.