

Technology Opportunity Program Meeting
October 16, 2002 – 5:30 p.m
Nandua High School, Onley, Virginia

Minutes

The Technology Opportunity Program meeting was held on October 16, 2002, 5:30 p.m. at Nandua High School, Onley, Virginia. Present: Cindy Holdren, Frank Moore, Jim Carey, Evan Clements, Paul Berge, Joe Simpkins, Steve Furness, Jesse Poulson, Rev. Charles Bates, Iris Gunter-Smith, Christina Reed, Bill and Lynn Bowen, Johnnie Goodman, Pauline Milbourne, Jim Belote, Jon Johnson and Carla Woods.

Mr. Jon Johnson, Extension Area Specialist, Technology Development, indicated to the group that the Technology Opportunity Program (TOP) website is on screen on the library computers and available for members of the Technology Leadership Team to view after the meeting.

Mr. Johnson recapped details of the TOP for new members of the group. He indicated that the purpose to the TOP Grant is to provide a technological-based tool for underserved communities focusing on and addressing community issues. Johnson responded to discussions concerning the Eastern Shore Portal that its focus is a regional approach for economic development and emphasizes tourism. TOP's goal is to target smaller communities and to design web pages that can be quickly downloaded with a dialup connection. A key part of the TOP Grant is the Take Charge Program. Members were asked to refer to the "Take Charge in Accomack County" handout for further information on this component of the grant. The Take Charge Program consists of three community sessions of three hours each addressing: (1) "Where Are We Now?" (2) "Where Do We Want To Be?" and (3) "How Do We Get There?".

Minutes of the September 26 meeting were reviewed with no changes indicated by those present.

Mr. Johnson asked the committee what format would be best for Accomack County's Take Charge sessions. Mr. Moore indicated that if the location is different for each session, we may not have the same people in attendance if it is desired to build on each meeting. However, since the TOP sites are located in different areas of the county (Wachapreague, Locust Mont, Onancock and Horntown) it was decided that meetings should be held at locations convenient to these communities. Mr. Clements suggested a rotation of Nandua High School for the first Take Charge session, Arcadia for the second and returning to Nandua for the third session. It is important that communities have input on what's included in the website.

Mr. Clements discussed the need to reach service clubs, churches, etc. to broaden participation for the Take Charge sessions in February. Suggestions for publicity included: local bulletin board (Billy Barton's site), Eastern Shore Portal, ESVA.net

Calendar, church bulletins, local minister's association, and continued radio and newspaper releases. The group also agreed that Town Council members and Mayors of towns included in the grant should continue to be invited to Technology Leadership Team meetings. Ms. Holdren suggested flyers be posted in high traffic areas such as the Post Office and grocery stores. She also suggested a portable sign in front of Take Charge session locations. Nandua and the Community College have signs that can be borrowed.

Mr. Johnson asked the group to begin thinking of a name and naming process for the website. A contest was discussed. Mr. Belote asked who is responsible for maintaining the site and Mr. Johnson responded that after the grant it will be the Technology Leadership Team. Mr. Clements indicated that there is a need for a point of access for those not accustomed to using the internet. Mr. Johnson indicated that the TOP grant does not pay for infrastructure, but having a TLT in place helps with the application process for other sources of funds. Once a site is up and running and if it is successful, additional funds can be sought. Costs are minimal.

The TLT decided on the following dates for the Take Charge sessions: Tuesdays, February 11, 18, and 25, 2003. Mr. Johnson indicated that he has a copy of the Network Task Force's Regional Strategic Plan if members would like to view the document. Mr. Clements suggested this document be used as a discussion and starting point for the Take Charge sessions.

Members of the group viewed a multimedia presentation by Mr. Johnson entitled "A Probe into Basic Telephony and Telecommunications" and members were asked for their input. The group discussed the existing services in the area and how the TOP Grant can help communities evaluate and address these and other related community issues.

Mr. Clements suggested that NASA/Wallops be invited to be a part of the TLT. Mr. Johnson encouraged members of the group to invite others to serve on the committee.

Members of the TLT will be notified of the next meeting date and location. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 20.

The meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.