

ConnectKentucky Awarded National Excellence in Innovation Award by U.S. EDA



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*The U.S. Economic Development Administration presented
ConnectKentucky with Excellence in Innovation Award recognizing
the technology leader as a national model for economic development*

Aug. 30, 2006, Bowling Green, KY: Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Sandy K. Baruah was in Bowling Green today to present ConnectKentucky and Kentucky's *Prescription for Innovation* with the United States Economic Development Administration's 2006 Excellence in Innovation Award. The national award recognizes Kentucky's *Prescription for Innovation* as a national leader in innovative strategies for economic development.

ConnectKentucky and Kentucky's *Prescription for Innovation* are synonymous with technology development in the Commonwealth. Additionally, the technology-based economic development firm continues to be recognized as a national model by numerous federal organizations and other states.

According to Governor Ernie Fletcher, "ConnectKentucky's implementation of the *Prescription for Innovation* has established the Commonwealth as a national model for technology-based economic development. Over the last two years, technology in Kentucky has grown like never before, and communities statewide are realizing the benefits. I appreciate EDA's recognition of this important work and commend ConnectKentucky for this accomplishment."

Kentucky's *Prescription for Innovation* is a comprehensive plan to accelerate technology growth, particularly in the areas of broadband deployment and technology literacy and usage. The initiative maintains four key tenets for impacting statewide economic development:

- Full broadband deployment by the end of 2007;
- Dramatically improved use of computers and the Internet by all Kentuckians;
- A meaningful online presence for all Kentucky communities, to improve citizen services and promote economic development through e-government, virtual education, online healthcare; and
- Local technology leadership teams in every community to develop and implement technology growth strategies for local government, business and



ConnectKentucky: Accelerating Technology in the Commonwealth!

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industry, education, healthcare, agriculture, libraries, tourism, and community-based organizations.

Over the course of implementation of the *Prescription for Innovation*, statewide broadband availability and usage have increased by 36 percent and 45 percent respectively. An estimated 375,000 previously unserved households can now access broadband as private sector investment in telecommunications infrastructure has reached an unprecedented level in Kentucky. Currently, 82 percent of Kentucky homes can access broadband, on track to reach 100 percent availability in 2007. Home computer ownership has grown by 17 percent, and more than 100 counties are actively engaged in the eCommunity Leadership process to establish a nine-sector technology growth plan for accelerating technology locally. Moreover, the rate of Kentucky's high-tech job growth is outpacing the national average.

"The winners of EDA's Excellence Awards represent the best and brightest economic development methods and practices in use today. Their commitment to sound, research-based, market driven economic development is helping America's communities grow their economies and create jobs. I am grateful for their participation in our national awards program," said U.S. Assistant Secretary for Economic Development Sandy K. Baruah.

ConnectKentucky's steering committee is chaired by John R. Hall, retired chairman and CEO of Ashland Inc., who noted the significance of the public-private collaboration at the core of the partnership. "As government and the private sector work together towards shared goals for a brighter future for Kentucky, great things are happening and unprecedented progress is being realized. The ConnectKentucky partnership embodies that promise and the staff of the organization work hard to ensure that every community in the Commonwealth is the beneficiary of that progress. It is an honor for ConnectKentucky to be recognized as a national leader in economic development by the U.S. EDA."

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About ConnectKentucky: ConnectKentucky is leading the way into a new economy for Kentuckians. As Kentucky's technology-based economic development partnership, ConnectKentucky is a public-private alliance of leaders from private industry, government and education. By leveraging the latest in technology and networking, ConnectKentucky is ensuring Kentucky remains the place of choice to work, live and raise a family. For more information, visit www.connectkentucky.org.



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