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**TRAILL COUNTY TECHNOLOGY CENTER:
Final Report/Evaluation**

**Technology Opportunities Program
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**Prepared for
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SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

This report attempts to provide an evaluation of the Technology Opportunities Program Grant at Mayville State University (MSU) a primary sponsor and partner in the Trall County Technology Center (TCTC). These findings summarize the activities of TCTC from October 1, 1999 to September 30, 2002. There are numerous measurable accomplishments recorded in the following pages. This summary highlights the key points in evaluation of the TOP Grant to MSU for implementation of Trall County Technology Center activities, tasks and programs.

Summary

1. In the past 20 years Trall County has lost 1,147 persons (12% of its population). The loss of population has been largely attributed to the out-migration in search of job opportunities elsewhere. Several local agencies at the City and County levels have been working together to turn the tide of population and business loss around. The Mayville State University as a part of its service function has been instrumental in addressing economic development issues by creating Trall County Technology Center to create information technology jobs to fill the gap and to stimulate business development.
2. The Trall County Technology Center was created in response to active and long-standing dialog among MSU, the Trall County Economic Development Commission (TCEDC), May-Port Economic Development Corporation (MPEDC), and the May-Port CG Public Schools for economic development through application of information technology, "Creating an Information Technology Environment in Rural Community".

3. TCTC is a department within MSU and is designed as a community service agency (in response to the ND Board of Higher Education encouragement and the initiative of Dr. Ellen Chaffee, MSU Past President) for IT training, IT business incubation and IT business development. The primary goals of TCTC are:
 - a. To increase employment in Traill County
 - b. To promote economic/community development in Traill County service area and
 - c. To improve adult training and learning opportunities in Traill County and adjoining counties. The anticipated outcome is new entrepreneurship by encouraging invention and innovation.
4. In the past two years TCTC has conducted 22 workshops training 233 persons in beginning, intermediate and advanced computer instruction. In addition, an open house with 45 persons attending, and several tours of the TCTC were conducted countless persons attending. The present facility offers a large conference room, presently used for general meetings with the local, regional, and state leaders for information and idea exchanges.
5. To establish a business incubator, during much of 1999-2000, TCTC was involved in renovation of 12 office suites in West Hall and then renovation of 10 more office suits in Berg hall during 2001. Presently, all office suites in West Hall and three office suites in Berg Hall are occupied. The current occupancy of incubated businesses is 68%.
6. Four of the five tenants with 25 employees are information technology related businesses. The total annual salary of 25 persons in the incubator is \$625,000 with an overall economic impact of about \$2,000,000.

7. TCTC is a Department in Information Technology Services at MSU. The total staff consists of the CIO, a project director, a TC director and an administrative assistant. All services and management responsibilities rest with a half-time director and a three-quarter time administrative assistant. Because of the nature of its tasks TCTC draws from the computer center staff and other faculty as needed.
8. Mayville State University, as a part of its annual student survey, receives high marks for its initiative in IT instruction. By a large majority, the students express appreciation and support for the quality of IT instruction as a major foundation to compete in the IT related job market. The recently initiated MSU's IT Certificate Program would even further enhance IT competency of students for employment in the area.
9. Expansion of infrastructure at MSU by increasing the capacity and speed of data access, operation and feedback in 2001 was a major undertaking in increasing capacity and speed for training, access and business input and output.
10. Installation of broadband and Cable TV in the county in place of dial-up and long-distance connection was a major step undertaken with the TCTC staff involvement. Through TCTC efforts toll free phone is now available throughout Traill County. This opportunity has inter-connected all parts of Traill County and makes off-site training programs easier to implement.
11. Heart of the Valley Consortium & MSU will play a major role in distance learning and job training opportunities directly related to TCTC services.
12. One business (Firefly) graduated from the incubator last year indicating a promise of business development in the area and future potential for IT businesses.

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13. TCTC has developed a strong partnership with Griggs-Steele County and formed an East Central ND Technology Council, an essential mechanism, for exchange of ideas and IT training for adults and incubation of embryonic businesses.

14. TCTC, through Traill County EDC and Lake Agassiz Group works with local and regional entities for information exchange, training, project coordination and business incubation. This alliance has been beneficial and will be even more effective in the coming years.

Future 15. TCTC has initiated partnership with other technology centers in ND through training, joint programming and ideas for enhancing incubator business recruitment. MSU as a pioneer in IT has established a strong trend in enabling TCTC to push new IT frontiers in the region.

Future 16. TCTC has been promoting a closer association of businesses for IT use in the May-Port area, currently, examining options for forming a Chamber of Commerce. Association of rural businesses becomes a focal point for networking, marketing, and project initiation.

Future 17. TCTC recognizes the importance of outside funding for achieving self-sufficiency in the future. Discussions are currently underway to form a 501c(3) corporation as a step for being able to accept private grants and endowment. Long-term financial support by the region is needed to enable TCTC to accomplish its mission successfully.

18. TCTC is currently working on expanding, refining an interim strategic plan that was developed in August 2001. This plan would be based on the recent experience of TCTC

and also based on a new business survey to undertaken soon. Additional details of the new strategic plan will focus on direction of the TCTC within 1-3 and 3-5 years.

Future

19. TCTC through MSU Business & CIS Division has been encouraging students to be involved in entrepreneurship in the business incubator. Space is made available in the Technology Center for this purpose, which will enhance the students' positions as they receive IT training and enrich their work experience.
20. Several community leaders have been promoting the idea of business development resource center as a service function for TCTC. This is a new and important step, but requires addition resources for training, financial assistance and business management.

Findings

1. Location of Traill County between two Metropolitan Areas; Fargo, to the south; and Grand Forks to the north offers unique opportunities for the growth in IT technology jobs.
2. Sustainability is the major issue facing TCTC. Thus far, the grants from TOP, Experience Works (RRT), Centers of Excellence in Rural America (CERA) have augmented the contributions of the Mayville State University. Although, TCTC is presently a department within MSU and has enjoyed the support of the past president, Dr. Ellen Chaffee, it is a concern for attaining self-sufficiency within the next three years. While the North Dakota Board of Higher Education also encourages involvement of ND Universities/Colleges in economic development, it is not totally clear if special state funding will be earmarked to meet this need yet. A choice for TCTC is to tap some

private sources for training, business incubation, business development and consulting in economic development. Direct state funding for a successful technology centers performance is essential.

3. Related to funding needs, the small TCTC staff back up by the general MSU staff has been effective in the last three years. But to continue the TCTC mission at a scale commensurate with its goals requires a full time staff with resources to expand its outreach for training, incubation and business development. The present staff performance has been above expectation in the past three years.
4. Planning for short-term and long-term needs of IT in the region is essential and the *strategic plan* should address it as a guide for operation of TCTC. A detailed and well articulated strategic plan supplemented with annual work program benchmarks for accomplishment of tasks on a timely order and would assist in identifying strengths and weaknesses of TCTC efforts, as its programs expand and mature.
5. Cooperative work with Griggs-Steele Counties now and potentials in working with Cass/Grand Forks County in the near future are very useful and in the next 3-5 years will open up further opportunities to enhance the position of TCTC in the region.
6. Stronger ties with regional incubators would enable TCTC to share resources and while improving the outcome, it would be financially beneficial to all economic development agencies and units of governments and businesses in the region.
7. TCTC as a place for training, entrepreneurial efforts, and the support of invention, innovation and production in a rural setting has a unique opportunity to serve the rural parts of the Red River Valley. MSU is the only Higher Education Institution located in

the rural setting, in contrast with the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks and North Dakota State University in Fargo.

8. Training for IT in rural areas needs a major off-site component to reach out to those whose time and situation does not permit them to travel to a central location like Mayville. The off-site training session in addition to higher turnout of attendees creates community good will. This is a component that centers in urban settings lack and would complement their efforts as well while directly serving a rural region.
9. CERA & RRT have enhanced the position of TCTC through training and technical assistance. Where possible programs as such should be brought in to augment, the TCTC funding resources as well as adding new perspective to the training programs.
10. Information Technology Certificate is a bold step by MSU in structuring its program to increase competency of MSU students as a future pool of workers directly related to the functions and services of TCTC.

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Population

Traill County, located in southeastern North Dakota, had a population of 8,477 (1.3% of ND Population) in 2000. The largest communities in Traill County are Hillsboro (1,563) and Mayville (1,953). Other communities include several unincorporated settlements and Buxton (350), Galesburg (157), Hatton (707) and Portland (651). Mayville is the home of Mayville State University. Mayville and Portland, two neighboring towns are commonly referred to as "May-Port."

The major transportation routes in Traill County are I-29 (10 miles to the east), US Highway 18 (north-south arterial highway) and State Highway 200 (east-west arterial highway). Burlington Northern, Santa Fe Railroad lines run in a north-south direction one through Mayville and another parallel with I-29.

The county was settled in 1870 before North Dakota achieved statehood. By 1900, the population in Traill County reached its peak of 13,107. Since 1900 Traill County's population has fluctuated from decade to decade but in general it has had a decline of 35.3% since its peak (See Table 1). The gradual decline in population has been due to the improved farming technology leading to fewer but larger farms and smaller households over time reflecting lower birth rates. Between 1990 and 2000, the county lost 275 persons (3.1%). In the previous decades the out-migration has been even heavier and much of the population loss has accounted for people leaving the area in search of better job opportunities. Exhibit A "Traill County

Technology Center: A review and Evaluation, Technology Opportunities Program” provides detailed data on population and economy of Traill County.

Table 1
Population Change
In Traill County, ND

Year	Number	% Change
1880	4,123	
1890	10,217	147.8
1900	13,107	28.3
1910	12,545	(4.3)
1920	12,210	(2.7)
1930	12,600	3.2
1940	12,300	(2.4)
1950	11,359	(7.7)
1960	10,583	(6.8)
1970	9,571	(19.0)
1980	9,624	0.6
1990	8,752	(9.1)
2000	8,477	(3.1)

Source: ND Job Service, Discover ND

The number of persons under 18 declined 14% in the 1980s and 2.5% in the 1990s. Also the number of persons over 65 decreased about 15% in the 1990s. But, the age group 35-59 grew 25% since 1980 (See Table 2). The growth of 8.9% for age group 15-19 is in part due to the presence of Mayville State University. The growth in 35-59 year old age group, however, is significant. This change is likely due to the efforts of the county and communities with proactive economic development programs. Had the 1980s population change prevailed Traill County would have had less than 8,000 people today.

Table 2
Population Composition by Age Groups
for Traill County, ND

Age Group	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000
Under 5	709	553	507	(8.3)
5-9	646	678	543	(20.0)
10-14	652	655	642	(2.0)
15-19	948	655	713	8.9
20-24	888	583	519	(11.0)
25-34	1,158	1,168	835	(28.5)
35-44	880	1,082	1,266	17.0
45-54	848	811	1,080	33.2
55-59	483	349	415	18.9
60-64	567	439	334	(23.9)
65-74	980	851	714	(16.1)
75-84	638	639	625	(2.2)
85+	227	289	284	(1.7)
Median Age	33.0	35.7	39.0	9.2
Total	9,624	8,752	8,477	(3.1)

Source: US Bureau of the Census, Census of Population

In Traill County both the number and size of households are decreasing in the 1990s. The total households in the 1980s declined 3%, but increased slightly (0.4%) in the 1990s. The size of households declined 3.6% from 2.50 in 1990 to 2.41 in 2000. But the number of households with persons under 18 increased by 32% during the 1990s. Also, the number of female-headed households increased by about 6%.

The number of persons below poverty level in Traill County increased 27% during the 1980-90 period. It should be noted that the number of persons 65 and over for whom poverty was determined, decreased 42%, but the number of persons under 18 increased 54%. At the same time, although the number of families below poverty decreased 13%, those families with children less than 18 years of age experienced 22% increase. The number of female

householders also increased 49% in this period. More notably, the number of female householders with children under 18 years of age almost doubled. The persons below poverty level in Traill County in 2000 consisted of 10.9% and the children below poverty 14.1% of the population.

Since 1991 the total public school enrollment has declined 6.6%. Among the four school districts, Central Valley had a gain of 1.0%, but Hatton, Hillsboro and May-Port CG lost 7.8% and 4.2% and 11.2% respectively. This loss is, in part, due to the shrinking household size from 2.50 in 1990 to 2.41 in 2000 and out-migration of families with school age children. The overall public school enrollment losses, however, show 125 less students in 2001 compared to 1991. The net natural decrease of 223 persons accounts for a part of this decline.

The total enrollment at Mayville State University in the last 10 years shows a small increase of 1.7%. There has been a noticeable growth (61.2%) for students 25 years old and over. For those students under 22, there has been a decrease of 23.4%. The overall enrollment by class shows a growth of 10.2% but a decline of 12.9% by full time equivalent. Also, there has been a major increase (157.1%) in the number of special students from 42 in 1991 to 108 in 2000 indicating improved access for non-traditional students.

Economy

The total employment in Traill County increased 12.7% during the 1990s. Agricultural sector (due to sugar beet processing) had the largest increase (157%), followed by wholesale trade

(23.2%), finance/insurance/real estate (22.7%). Services have been the largest employer at 23% of the total employment in 1999 but had a growth of 11% since 1990. Government sector was about 20% of the total employment and grew 2.4% over a 10-year period.

A large number of government jobs are included in the Traill County public schools and Mayville State University. Mayville State University is an important economic node in Traill County. In 2001, the total full time equivalent number of faculty and staff was 153, which in turn generated (according to MSU sources) over 300 service/support jobs in Traill County. In the 2000-2002 biennium the total budget for MSU was \$19,365,000 of which \$10,887,000 (56%) was for salaries, about \$8,000,000 for operating expenditures and \$278,000 for equipment. Almost all of these dollars are spent in Traill County. With the multiplier effect, (according to MSU sources) the total generated annual impact in the county is about \$30,000,000. The four school districts in Traill County generated about \$7,000,000 annually about 70% (\$4,900,000) were for salaries and 30% (\$2,100,000) for operating expenses. The total monetary contribution of the school district including a multiplier for support/service jobs contributes about \$20,000,000 to the county's economy. At the same time the total full time equivalent of teachers and support staff was 206 in 2001 generating 400 service/support jobs in the county.

A recent survey of 428 firms in Traill County indicated that 18% of the firms were managed by the owner/operators. The median size of the 241 firms that responded to the survey was three employees. About 30% (79) of the respondents had attempted hiring workers during the previous year, but only 72% (of the 79) were successful in securing the needed employees. The

majority of the firms surveyed had less than five employees. The Traill County job market attracts service type workers, but production workers are harder to attract.

While about 59% of the respondents felt higher wages and fringe benefits are important in attracting qualified workers. But only 13% of the employers offered comparable wages and benefits. About one third of the employers offered some training to new or present employees. Larger firms felt that staff turn over was a problem. Many of these firms use information technology and look for employees with IT skills. Nearly 50% of the employers reported that their employees use IT equipment at work to access databases, bookkeeping and word processing. Most of these businesses have Internet connections, but 30% said they have Internet applications and only 14% conducted business on the Internet. Many of the internet users utilize a telephone modem at 56k or less. About 40% of the firms stated that they were interested in IT facilities to help their businesses. But only 30% recognized a need for upgrading their system.

Another survey conducted in 2000, "Traill County Labor Market Study" revealed that more persons travel from Traill County for work than those who come into the county for work. About 35% of the available work force in Traill County are professionals, technicians or managers, about 70% of whom have training or degrees beyond high school. Because of the impact of Mayville State University, with major emphasis on information technology and computer training, a large number of persons in the service area of Traill County have some degree of technology skills. About 75% of the workers expressed a need for new training to enhance job opportunities. Compared to other professions, software development interests a large part of the work force in Traill County. About 1,900 persons expressed interest in working

for software development firms. Those include: 50% in word processing; 35% in spreadsheet; 28% in database; 28% in desktop publishing; 22% in hardware proficiency; 5% in programming, and; 13% in writing HTML.

The median household and family income for Traill County was slightly above the median income for ND in 1990. Traill County is part of a six county economic region in southeastern North Dakota with strong economic ties to the Fargo Metropolitan Area in Cass County. Between 1990 and 1999, the average annual wage for all sectors increased 39%. Manufacturing sector, in aggregate with transportation/communication/utilities, grew 56%; service 53%; and agriculture 34%. Retail trade sector experienced the smallest growth (18.3%). The total annual wages in this period increased 57% from \$40,726,000 to \$63,835,000 with agriculture leading with 278% growth (due to sugar beet processing operation). The largest sector with a total annual wage of \$13,782,000 was government, followed closely by manufacturing and transportation/communication/utilities sector. Retail trade had the slowest growth with a 23.7% increase.

The four economic sectors including agriculture, wholesale trade, retail trade and services produced a total of \$235,555,000 in receipts/sales in 1987 and \$336,331 in 1997, an increase of 42.8%. Services had the largest growth (187.5%) in this period. Wholesale trade, which was the largest sector, increased 74.4%. Agricultural sector in Traill County during the 1992-97 period faced an unusual situation. Despite the increasing farm sizes, there were fewer acres in production in 1997 than in 1992. Also, the market value of products showed a loss of 1.1% from

\$85,464,000 in 1992 to \$84,519,000 in 1997, although the value of products per farm had a modest gain of 8.6%. This was offset by an increase in production expenditures of 14.7%. In addition, the local governmental entities including Traill County, the cities and township generate about \$12,000,000 annually through property taxes and state transfer payments almost all of which is spent in the county for staff salaries and improvement programs including social programs and public assistance. The eight banks in Traill County report total assets of about \$195,000,000, a major part of which is owned by local business and account holders.

Between 1980 and 2000, Traill County experienced a growth of about 40% in taxable sales and purchases and a growth of 165% in the actual taxes collected. In 2000, the taxable sales and purchases was \$36,549,000 and collected taxes were \$1,501,000. Traill County produced 0.8% in 1990 of the total state of North Dakota taxes from sales and purchases compared to 0.4% in 2000, *showing a lag behind other counties*

Growth in IT Workforce

The Traill County Labor Market Study contends that it is easier for software firms to recruit the needed workforce than other industries. This is based on the responses by 1,900 persons interested in working for software companies. About 58% of these individuals have some college/votech training, 22% are college graduates and 14% have vocational/technical training. About 8% have advanced degrees. Nearly 50% of these individuals are skilled or very skilled in word processing; 34% in spreadsheet; 28% in database; 28% in desktop publishing; 21% in hardware proficiency; 6% in programming and 13% in writing HTML. This change is

attributable to MSU technology emphasis, which was number 20 in the Yahoo's "most wired" in 2000.

In this survey 1,450 persons expressed interest in working for a technical support/call-in center. This group had high computer application skills with a median of 8 years of experience. About 74% of this group was between 25-54 years old with a majority of 33% who were in the 35-33 year old age group. Over 60% of these individuals were skilled or very skilled in word processing; 33% in spreadsheet; 29.5% in database; 33% in desktop publishing; 36% in hardware proficiency; 7% in programming and 7% in writing HTML. The median age for this group was 40.

Issues and Problems

Historically, Traill County has been losing population due to the changing farm technology, decreasing births and out-migration. In 2000, the population of Traill County (8,477) was only 65% of its peak of 13,107 in 1900. In the past 20 years alone, the county lost 1,147 persons or 12% of its population through out-migration, to other population centers. While the actual population loss during the 1990s in Traill County has slowed down to its lowest level in the past 50 years, we see a rise in poverty for certain families and female householders with children under 18. There was a net loss of 6.6% in school enrollments between 1991 and 2000. Two school districts, Hatton and Hillsboro had net losses of 7.6% and 4.2% respectively. The Central Valley School District had a net gain of 3 students in the 1990s. May-Port Schools also lost population since it consolidated with Clifford-Galesburg Schools in 1993.

The regional population decline also affected enrollment at Mayville State University during the 1990s. Although the total enrollment shows a net increase of 10.2%, the full-time equivalent shows a loss of 12.9%. Yet, there seems to be a slow down in the rate of decline as the enrollment (FTE) has been the same since 1997; the year MSU became a technology university. Other issues in information technology in Traill County had been the bandwidth, cost of long distance calls and lack of access to telecommunication. Installation of direct infrastructure in May-Port and Hillsboro areas is completed now and offers a much quicker access to outside Traill County. T1 access that seems expensive at this time needs to be considered as a part of continuing infrastructure improvement to keep Traill County equipped with the most up-to-date information technology systems.

Other issues related to population decline and job opportunities consist of natural gas and general utility infrastructure, usually in high demand by most business/communities and essential for agricultural product processing. In the past, lack of job opportunities has accelerated out-migration of people, which in turn has impacted school enrollment, businesses, and services of various types. The absence of job opportunities forces both the high school and college graduates to move away in and out of state. The larger impact is also population loss for North Dakota.

A third issue is sufficient funding to achieve self-sufficiency for the Technology Center. To sustain the present system of incubation, technical training and assistance on county/area wide basis, there is a need for additional sources of funds to continue and strengthen the level of

services presently offered. At the same time, since the Traill County Technology Center is a department within the Mayville State University, the self-sufficiency is not an urgent issue although the lack of sufficient funds for a more expanded delivery of services is. According to Dr. Ellen Chaffee, Past President of MSU points out the commitment of the North Dakota Board of Higher Education by actively supporting technology related program as a university-community relationship.

Emerging Trends

In the past twenty years the county and local governments in Traill County have attempted to provide an economic development assistance program first through a multi-county regional agency (Lake Agassiz Regional Council) and in the past ten years by forming a county wide economic development agency (Traill County Economic Development Commission). At the same time the local communities like May-Port, Hillsboro and Hatton have initial local economic development programs. In spite of insufficient resources and scale of problems ranging from household poverty to job related population decline, several of these agencies have attempted strategies for business assistance, housing and infrastructure improvement, which have been instrumental in slowing down the decline of population.

Despite the general population decline, there has been some growth in employment. There was a total increase of 12.7% (346 jobs) in the 1990s in overall employment with varying rates of growth for different economic sectors. This growth, however, reflects an expanding service area for workers who commute from other areas outside of the county. Two areas of growth,

wholesale trade and finance/insurance/real estate, show above average growth (23.2% and 22.7%) and indicate potential community growth in Traill County. The employment in public schools and Mayville State University shows a modest growth of 3.3% (30 jobs), in the past five years. In the past five years, MSU has added 23 FTE new jobs because of new programs. The total direct income in the county in 1999 was \$378,044,000 compared to \$280,508,000 in 1990 and \$145,282,000 in 1980. The total annual wages grew 56.7% from \$40,726,000 in 1990 to \$63,835,000 in 1999. The median households in Mayville alone grew 87% in the 1990s. The total sales and use tax during April-June 2002 grew 40% for a comparable period in 2001.

Mayville State University (MSU) has taken a major step in economic development in Traill County by housing TCTC as a department. It also has been actively pursuing training and development of students in IT related instruction. For example, the use of computer services between 1985 and 2000 increased from 65% of students to 91%. The national average for computer use in all accredited colleges and universities was 73%. Likewise, for the use of notebook computers, 92% expressed satisfaction in 2000 compared to 86% in 1998. In a 2000 student survey 73% of the students said that the notebook computer has enriched their learning experience. About 38% of the students said that they would like additional skill/technical training for hardware networking; 16% in use of Access; 14% in Internet resources; 12% in PowerPoint and 15% in use of Excel-work programs. In ranking the computer-training program at MSU, the students give very high scores (between 4-5 points, based on 1-5 points system) to: increased marketability, increased task skill, and general computer application.

MSU has begun an IT Certificate Program to be awarded to those students who meet the minimum requirements of 16 hours of computer courses with a final assessment as the Senior Capstone Course. The objectives of the IT Certificate Program are: (1) to provide highly qualified business and education employees; (2) to extend MSU's mission of technology-enriched education; (3) to recognize students for high level of preparation in IT; and (4) to enhance the students' employment options.

The four sectors of agriculture, wholesale trade, retail trade and services had a total sale of \$336,331,000 in 1999 compared with \$235,555,000 in 1987, indicating an average annual growth of 4.3%. In Cass County, the annual growth was 8.6% in the same period. Among these sectors in Traill County, the services had a growth of 187.5% from \$6,135,000 in 1987 to \$17,639,000 in 1997. This shows a high potential for service industry in Traill County including the technology-oriented businesses.

Traill County, as a part of a six county planning and economic development region (Lake Agassiz Regional Development Commission) in southeastern North Dakota, is tied to both Fargo (in the southeast region) and Grand Forks (Red River Regional Council) in the northeast region. Although, the present socio-economic data shows major differences between Traill County and Cass and Grand Forks Counties, there are many opportunities to capitalize at this midway location, without being burdened with the heavy urban costs of Fargo or Grand Forks. Traill County is located in the center of the Red River Corridor and this central location will be advantageous to IT related businesses in the coming years.

The southeast region (Lake Agassiz Regional Development Commission including Traill County) has 25% of the state's population, 31.5% of its employment, higher annual average wage and per capita income and provides 33% of the taxable sales and purchases. As the urbanization of Fargo and Grand Forks Metropolitan Areas expand, the spill over effects offer opportunities for capturing economic increments by the adjoining counties.

A major opportunity that energized many of the planned efforts was the Technology Opportunities Program that helped the Mayville State University area initiate a program "Creating an Information Technology Environment in a Rural Community". Mayville State University in cooperation with schools, communities and Traill County, was instrumental in forming the Traill County Technology Center as a part of its Information Technology Program to interface with the business community in general and also to develop programs that would assist businesses, individuals and groups in training and technical assistance in order to create new employment opportunities.

TECHNOLOGY OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

Trail County Technology Center

“Creating an Information Technology Environment in a Rural Community” has been a challenging task. Most often concepts such as information technology environment are associated with large urban centers, where the infrastructure, human resources and range of other related opportunities are either in place or relatively easy to access. But, this challenge in Traill County became a major community agenda. Mayville State University and the community, joining in a strong partnership, took the initiative to leap ahead with a positive attitude to make things happen.

Goals

The Traill County Technology Center was organized in 1999 to accomplish the following major goals.

1. To increase employment in Traill County.
2. To promote economic/community development in Traill County service area.
3. To improve adult training and learning opportunities in Traill County and adjoining counties.

In addition, the Traill County Technology Center has identified a number of minor goals closely related to major goals.

1. To reduce poverty.
2. To improve the effectiveness of Public Safety Services.
3. To enhance K-12 educational performance.

4. To enhance post-secondary educational performance.
5. To expand economic development partnership with Mayville State University

In fact, the minor goals are subsets of the major goals. In some cases, a minor goal is the foundation for other major goals. For example, Mayville State University as an economic node contributes about \$40 million annually to the economy of the area/county. It is the second largest source of employment, after the public schools, and by virtue of its training programs provides 153 direct and 300 indirect job opportunities in the area. It is the only resource for professional training in Traill County and has contributed to IT employment increases consistently even before it adopted an all campus policy for notebook computer use. In fact, a majority of the employees at the TCTC incubated businesses are graduates of MSU. Its overall economic impacts on the May-Port communities are very pronounced. About 153 staff/faculty and 770 students are users of a wide range of community services from retail to housing and to utilities. In addition, it provides the community with a reliable temporary work force, while it also enriches the social and cultural aspects of the region.

Strategies

The formation of Traill County Technology Center is a direct strategy for working toward all of the major and minor goals. This organization is designed to accomplish the goals in several ways. While it is only three years old, it has made a significant stride in addressing the IT related issues and opportunities in a broad front. The idea of incubator to bring in the businesses needing assistance is the front line of assisting and enabling businesses to become independent

and freestanding entities. Training in information technology is another major front undertaken by the TCTC. Entrepreneurship by encouraging invention and innovation is yet another arena within which the TCTC is focusing much attention to develop new services and products. Partnership is also another strategic vehicle that brings the University together with business communities to promote cooperation, assistance and sharing of available resources for regional economic development without regards for political boundaries.

Benchmark Objectives

Development of certain objectives would assist the Technology Center in establishing benchmarks for more quantifiable measures in moving ahead toward its goals.

1. Develop a plan for the TCTC and incubator system. The purpose of the TC Plan is to set forth specific objectives for: (a) general or special training programs including workshops and open hours for use of the center; (b) the yearly programs for number and sizes of businesses to be incubated; (c) types of technical/financial assistance to be made available to the incubator tenants; (d) setting up a transition place for a broader technology center as the incubated businesses are ready to move out independently; (e) guidelines for evaluation and reporting of the incubated businesses; (f) guidelines for transition of incubated businesses to community setting/Technology Center; (g) development of a financial reporting system for the TCTC including annual incomes and expenditures analysis; and (h) development of guidelines for TCTC annual work programs.

2. Although TCTC is a department in MSU and has the local, regional and state support, a continuing source of funding is necessary for the operation of the Technology Center from the rents, fees and contracts. But in the next 5-7 years a larger pool is needed for developing partnerships between the Technology Center and its tenants. Also, the additional funds would enable TCTC develop more technical assistance by expanding its staff to offer new programs for business development assistance, broader IT training, and business development models.
3. Marketing plan for TCTC is an avenue for promoting MSU in general and its emphasis on technology training in particular. The marketing plan also should focus on the quality of life in rural North Dakota and also the attributes of a rural region with a University in it. In addition, the marketing plan should be tied into Traill County EDC, May-Port EDC and other community economic development efforts to promote a broad countywide economic development effort, based on strong partnership and genuine cooperation. In the past year, TCTC has taken major steps in improving its marketing plan, but it needs to focus more effort for a wider area wide recognition.
4. Partnership/collaboration with other technology centers in the region has been the soul of the Technology Center in Traill County that has given life to the projects in the incubator now and the capacity to overcome the problems that indeed may have looked insurmountable in the not too distant past. Strengthening the present partnership on a countywide and perhaps region wide basis has helped to make the Technology Center a stronger economic entity for training and business assistance. Because of the heavy involvement of MSU in regional economic development, it would be beneficial to look at

the North Dakota University System as a partner. The location of North Dakota State University and the University of North Dakota in the region poses opportunities and challenges. Resource sharing and cooperative endeavors would enhance the position of TCTC and MSU and would reduce potential conflicts in the regional economic development practices. During 2001-2002, TCTC has established a strong tie with Steele and Griggs Counties (a designated Empowerment Zone) in forming the East Central ND Technology Council. These two counties are even more rural than Traill County and this alliance is beneficial for all three counties and perhaps other adjoining counties.

5. Participation in IT related legislative and promotional activities at the state level. Partnership promotes participation and participation facilitates collaboration in a broad range of economic related activities. The field of information technology because of its newness needs statewide recognition and support as a major tool for economic development in North Dakota. To give emphasis to IT as a viable economic development sector, there is a need for bringing the state resources together to develop a state wide planning process and implementation strategies. Such efforts require legislative action, tax base sharing from the present state financial sources such as designation of a part of state sales tax for rural development.

Organization

The Traill County Technology Center consists of a half-time director and 3/4 time administrative assistant guided by an Advisory Committee made up of a broad representation from education, business, State/local governments and citizens and yet it is under the sponsorship of MSU as one

of its operating departments. The MSU Administration and many other MSU departments support the TCTC as a department at Mayville State University, with full access to infrastructure and facilities. Also, one of the important aspects of TCTC is access to the students with interest in information technology for internship, student entrepreneurship and permanent employment with the businesses incubated in TCTC and other businesses beyond.

Functions

One of the major tasks of the Technology Center is a business incubator, although the Technology Center is much broader in services than just incubating businesses. The Technology Center is envisioned as a place for training, invention, innovation, experimentation, production and marketing of the technology related plans, processes, products and techniques. The business incubator offers 12,000 square feet of office space in two buildings on MSU Campus. There are 12 suites of office in West hall, all of which are all occupied now. There are also 10 suites of office space in Berg Hall; three of which are occupied and the remaining seven suites are available for occupancy under TCTC recruitment guidelines. All suites are connected to the MSU Local Area Network (LAN) for high-speed Internet access. Presently, five businesses are located in the business incubator occupying 68% of the space; three in West Hall and two in Berg Hall. Since the beginning of the Technology Center, the five businesses have created 25 jobs in 2002 (22 in 2001) with a total annual salary of about \$625,000 (\$550,000 in 2001). The following is a brief description of each business, their function and space occupancy.

ComMark Inc. (8 offices, 2nd floor West hall)

A web development company involved in consulting and design, marketing consultations, and sales training. It also contracts for high-end programming to other businesses. Currently it has 14 employees working in the TCTC, with 4 other staff in Grand Forks.

HomeLink TeleVoice (1 office, 2nd floor West Hall)

A new startup company that was setting up a statewide wireless Internet networks. It now develops and distributes work force program to perform technology support, Internet research and data verification. It employs one person in Mayville.

ND Dept of Public Instruction- Child Nutrition Program (1 office, Berg Hall)

One-person office that coordinates USDA Child Nutrition Programs in North Dakota. Programs administered include schools, child daycare centers, Headstart Programs, migrant schools and feeding programs on Indian Reservations. The need was critical for the office to have access to a broadband Internet connection because of extensive telecommuting.

Trails County Economic Development Commission (1 office, 2nd floor West Hall)

The TCEDC provides professional services to improve community infrastructure and assist entrepreneurs with business planning and development. It is funded by a 4 mill countywide levy, which generates \$90,000 per year. TCEDC provides access to micro-loans and other government assisted financing through the Lake Agassiz Regional Development Corporation and some 0% three year loans in cooperation with the local economic development groups. The

potential service that the TCEDC can provide to tenants is an invaluable resource for the TCTC. It employs one full-time director, plus a one quarter-time assistant. TCEDC, in a broad sense, is a vital part of TCTC because of its jurisdiction for economic development, its coverage and access to community resources.

Valley Computer System LLP (3 offices, Berg Hall)

It designs, builds, and maintains high quality computer systems for residential and commercial customers. It specializes in computer consulting and support, and network design, implementation, and administration. Also, it installs Ethernet networks for small to medium sized businesses. Two owners, one of whom works full-time with the company. They also employ two student interns part-time.

Firefly

A husband and wife team occupied a suite in West Hall in December 2001. They moved from New York City but continued employment there by telecommuting. In August 2002, because of their need for a larger facility, they left (graduated) the incubator and purchased office space in the community.

Other functions of TCTC extend to direct working with the local and regional economic development agencies for coordination and program sharing, administration of two programs under "Centers of Excellence in Rural America", Experience Works (Green Thumb) Rural Revitalization through Technology (RRT) for job training of rural residents for employment and

a host of tasks related to out-reach for information, training and technical assistance. Since the incubator facility has been completed, the remaining tasks related are largely to seek new starting businesses and general operation of the physical facility. Seeking starting IT businesses is a two-prong task and requires out-reach for already IT related home-based businesses coming on line, but more importantly stimulate entrepreneurship in IT businesses. Training and technical assistance, in part, deals with stimulating IT Business entrepreneurs, although it plays a major role in assisting existing area businesses in technology related areas.

Infrastructure

As an institution of higher education, Mayville State University already had access to a broadband communication service and has been an innovator and leader in information technology. Implementation of the notebook computer in 1997 has received national recognition.

From 1996, a Community Technology Committee was actively seeking ways to broaden community access by converting to a system other than long distance phone connection. After months of search and discussion, contacts with the local/regional telephone companies provided mixed results with no long-term solution to the community wide telecommunication access needs until TCTC was established. Within several months two regional companies provided toll free Internet access in May-Port area and Hillsboro and then expanded the system to all areas of the county. At the same time those two companies with encouragement from TCTC established broadband access in these communities in the fall of 2001.

Equipment/Facilities

The Traill County Technology Center (TCTC) located on the Mayville State University (MSU) campus has access to campus network and phone resources. The MSU campus has a 10mb connection to the North Dakota Higher Education Computer Network (HECN). The HECN has redundancy to reduce downtime for in-state traffic and has two high-speed Internet connections for out-of state traffic. The 10mb connection allows MSU & the TCTC to connect at high speeds for data and video transmission.

On the MSU campus, Information Technology Services is in the final phase of upgrading the campus network from a 10mb hub network to a 100mb switched network to the desktop. This last phase will be completed in late 2002. The TCTC also has access to video conferencing through the North Dakota University System (NDUS) Interactive Video Network (IVN), which is in the process of converting to an Internet Protocol (IP) Video Network. Once the IP video network conversion is complete, the TCTC will have more flexibility in video connectivity.

The physical facilities are located in three buildings inter-connected with ground/underground walkways. Old Main houses the computer center and training facilities. West Hall, a unique historic building like Old Main, accommodates 12 incubator suites on its second floor. The office spaces are equipped with appropriate electrical wiring, telephone and Ethernet wiring for connections to the LAN and also for climate control. A part of Berg Hall is renovated for a suite of ten offices with electrical/Ethernet wiring, climate control, telephone and shared teleconferencing equipment with an administrative center.

Advisory Committee

An advisory committee consisting of MSU President, MSU Vice-President of Academic Affairs, MSU CIO/TOP Project director, TCTC Director, Representatives of May-Port CG Schools and Hatton Schools, TCEDC Executive Director, a ND Legislator, a member of the TCEDC, a bank President and a newspaper person and one of the original members of the Community Technology Committee serve as general overseers and policy group. The committee meets monthly to review the activity and progress of the Technology Center. The Advisory Committee is very optimistic about the future impact of the TCTC on a broad range of community/area issues relevant to economic development and the general quality of life. A large majority of the TCTC Advisory Committee believes that the Technology Center would have a major impact on population growth, business climate, general economic development, inter and intra community communication services, quality of life, community partnership, area planning, business networking, and life long learning opportunities. Almost 100% are in agreement that TCTC will improve community and area economic development through communication technology and work force training. They also express, with certainty, that business development and business incubation is the only way to go.

Position in the Community and Region

The Traill County Technology Center, in addition to being involved in the Centers for Excellence in Rural America and Experience Works (Green Thumb) Rural Revitalization through Technology and other tasks described above, is involved in direct regional development efforts. East Central Technology Council (ECTC), presently consisting of Griggs, Steele and

Trail Counties is one such example. Griggs and Steele County have been designated as an Empowerment Zone, one of 10 rural areas chosen for major federal assistance for economic development through the US Department of Agriculture. These two counties and communities within them share similar goals with Traill County to reduce out-migration by creating new jobs. The advantage of Traill County on this regional development effort is its emphasis on application of information technology to create new jobs. ECTC is a model in rural revitalization and is expected to also include the rural parts of Cass and Grand Forks Counties in due time.

Community Involvement

Partnership

It all began with an idea to make technology the focal point of economic development in Traill County. For decades, Traill County had lost population and businesses and despite major efforts by the cities and the county governments, the light at the end of the tunnel looked indeed very far away. But, in the mid-nineties certain action through a promising partnership began to change the picture. In 1995 a two-track concept in wider technology application began to take shape in Mayville. One track was to enhance the position of students at Mayville State University (MSU) with full personal use of notebook computers. This was an innovative approach and had only been tried before by three other universities in the United States. The objective was obvious, to put students on the cutting edge of technology skills. It was a revolutionary idea and with the leadership of Dr. Ellen Chaffee, Past President of MSU, it was put into a campus wide practice in 1997. The second track was an extension of this same concept in Traill County communities as an instrument for economic development. There were many obstacles to overcome. But a group

of MSU faculty, Traill County and Mayville-Portland Area officials were convinced that the way to slow down the out-migration of people and shrinking of the jobs was to build a system of technology training for new and existing businesses. Thus, the idea of establishing a Technology Center for Traill County was born, to implement plans and programs for "Creating an Information Technology Environment in a rural Community".

Participation

What strengthened the partnership from the very beginning was a positive and open participation by many community sectors. From the outset, it seemed that by 1995 a quiet revolution was taking place on the Mayville State University campus and the May-Port communities for doing something about the economic stagnation and population loss in Traill County. Some of the community members and MSU staff had been exchanging ideas to address issues in the area. Soon, these exchanges developed into more serious and in-depth brain storming opportunities for working together with a general goal to enhance job opportunities through initiating a process for information technology training on an area wide-basis.

The diverse group came together recognizing the common problems of lack of cohesion, capital and human resources for economic development in Traill County. Mayville State University, the centerpiece of this effort, was the first to step forward as the anchor partner. May-Port EDC and Traill County EDC, immediately joined MSU. In a very short time, the other Traill County communities, May-Port School District and the business communities joined forces. As an ad-hoc group, the Community Technology Committee became active in targeting areas of

technology access and gathered momentum as the issues were addressed and alternative solutions were sought. By early 1997, the participation had flourished into a solid alliance among the key groups in Traill County.

Action

The Technology Advisory Committee soon began to assess methodically the conditions and developed a plan of action. At the outset, the Committee was fully aware of the constraints and opportunities in Traill County. For example, MSU as a state supported university had access to broadband for accessing educational and other agencies for research, distance education and other exchanges. But, the communities of Mayville and Portland, as well as other communities needed to use long distance phone link to connect to Internet services in Grand Forks. Many discussions with the telephone company and Cable TV company serving the area produced little results and neither of these companies seemed enthusiastic about IT opportunities in Traill County. The Committee joined by other Traill County committee representatives took charge to examine other opportunities for bringing direct access to computer technology to Traill County. Polar Communications Inc. of Park River responded with enthusiasm and confidence for bringing in Internet services to May-Port communities without the long distance call difficulty. In April 1997, May-Port Economic Development Corporation signed an agreement with Polar Communications for services and in two months Polar had made arrangements with Qwest for a dial up Internet connection. In June 1997, May-Port communities and Hatton area had the long awaited direct dial Internet service.

That autumn, Mayville State University began its campus-wide use of the notebook computer and the administration expressed strong interest in establishing a technology center on campus. Due to unavailability of funds, the idea of a technology center at first looked as far away as the planet Jupiter, but the MSU Administration kept looking for opportunities. One of the basic steps taken was to strengthen the university-community partnership. The opportunity came in Fall, 1999 when MSU was awarded funding from the Department of Commerce, Technology Opportunities Program. "Creating an Information Technology Environment in a Rural Community" idea was a reality by establishing a Technology Center as a department within MSU.

A ready tenant for the Technology Center was ComMark, a new technology company with staff of four and already on the campus. But space for the center available in West Hall and Berg Hall needed renovation, including appropriate wiring, to make it suitable for a full-fledged technology center. The name Traill County Technology Center came from the importance of emphasis on area-wide service perspective based on the strong partnership that had been forged between MSU and Traill County Economic Development Commission, May-Port EDC, and an on-going dialog with Griggs and Steele Counties to the west for formation of a regional information technology council. This alliance is viewed as a key for IT skill training, exchange of ideas and business development.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Outcome Achievements

The Traill County Labor Market Study, conducted with participation of TCTC, indicated that: 56% of the labor force was skilled in word processing; 35% had skill in spreadsheet; 28% had skills in data base; 11.5% were skilled in desktop publishing; 18.2% skilled in writing HTML; 6.3% were skilled in programming and 23.4% skilled in installing hardware. Such data is impressive and points out the readiness of Traill County for expansion and development of IT related business. This study, however, surveyed a large number of individuals outside of the county that may have influenced the high response rate in IT technology questions. Yet, the survey indicates the potential of the area and its opportunities for turning the employment situation around.

Beginning in October 1999, several tasks needed immediate attention to make the Technology Center operational. The first step was to allocate nearly all office spaces in West Hall for business incubator. Some remodeling and wiring was needed to upgrade the 12 office suites, which was accomplished by December of 1999. In addition, minor renovation of space was needed to prepare the Training Center in the Old Main Building. By January 2000, the Training Center was ready for operation and the incubation and office suites were made available, and the installation of broadband was completed in February 2000. Soon after, the first tenant, ComMark, with four employees occupied several suites with a reservation of up to seven suites for expansion. By October 2001, ComMark had 18 employees. A similar series of steps were

taken for renovation and upgrading of Berg hall to create 10 additional suites. These suites were ready for occupancy in November 2001.

One of the basic steps was to hire a director, as the process of space preparation and marketing of the Technology Center needed sufficient attention. The half-time position, although insufficient, at this time, was a first step to start the functions. At the same time an internship program was established for MSU students in the Center for part-time student employment and business assistance. Additionally, an administrative assistant was hired to be shared with the Traill County EDC that was located in the incubator. By early 2001, the TCTC had 3 tenants in the incubator and two potential tenants waiting for completion of the incubation space in Berg Hall.

Another major step was negotiation with Polar Communication to install a completely new telecommunications infrastructure including telephone, broadband and cable TV in the May-Port community. This was one of the basic goals suggested several years earlier, but was not deemed feasible by the cable provider and the telephone company. TCTC staff was heavily involved in bringing broadband and cable TV to the May-Port area.

A step in regional training efforts was taken when Experience Works (Green Thumb Inc.) entered into a contract with the TCTC as the statewide coordinator for IT related training in the rural area. Rural Revitalization through Technology (RRT) demonstrated the need for a regional approach for IT Training. In addition, a series of informal dialogs have been conducted within the North Dakota University System to provide for networking among the universities for

promoting partnership and cooperation in those areas established by each university or state college. This would give smaller institutions like Mayville State University the opportunity to pursue its technology-training mission and not be impeded by the size of resources in larger institutions.

Presently, there are few businesses with web sites in the county. This picture has significantly improved with the broadband capability in two major communities in Traill County. Today, all businesses have access to Internet and most with e-commerce capability. The TCTC has attempted to bring into its incubator the businesses with existing or potential IT capability. The initial strategy of TCTC was to secure six IT businesses for the incubator during the three-year program period. Today, four IT related businesses occupy the facility. A fifth IT related business that was recruited in the fall of 2001 (Firefly) has graduated from the incubator. The second strategy was to give assistance to three existing businesses to incorporate e-commerce in their services. Three businesses are already operating in the incubator with this capability. A third strategy was to determine the existing level of adult workers in IT training. The TCTC, through 22 workshops, has trained 233 people in the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of computer training. It has an agreement with ComMark for providing advanced IT training for the coming years. In addition, the Technology Center is equipped to provide intermediate and advanced training through an agreement with MSU faculty as needed. Appendix 1 provides details of the tasks accomplished during October 1, 1999-September 30, 2002.

Measurable Achievements

1. Strong partnership between Mayville State University, May-Port EDC, Traill County Economic Development Commission, Cities of Mayville, Portland, Buxton, Hatton, and Hillsboro Public Schools for broadening the economic base through project sharing and IT training.
2. Creation of a strong technology center with 22 well equipped office suites on MSU campus to accommodate IT related businesses.
3. A strong pool of part time workers from MSU students with good skills is available to help businesses in the incubator and in the communities. Of the 700 students on the campus, there is a large field of part-time workers to choose from, based on the nature and emphasis on the off-campus businesses, as well as those housed in the TC incubator.
4. Development of a toll free phone system between the communities interconnecting them for general communication and Internet access.
5. Development of free dial up Internet connection in May-Port and Hatton Areas initially and now a fully operational broadband.
6. Installation of necessary IT related hardware, in cooperation with MSU.
7. Direct economic impact of businesses in the incubator and the financial resources allocated to the TCTC. Presently, the annual salaries for 25 employees are about \$625,000.
8. Yearly IT training programs and out-reach for potential entrepreneurs.

9. Formalized alliance with Griggs, Steele Counties Empowerment Zone to establish and East-central North Dakota Technology Council for training, information exchange, and business incubation (See Appendix 2).
10. Establishment of the Heart of the Valley Interactive Television (HOV-ITV) Consortium consisting of 18 school districts in the seven counties in eastern North Dakota to provide distance learning opportunities using telecommunication technology (See Appendix 3).
11. Centers of Excellence in Rural America (CERA) for bringing the information technology to rural areas, is also a part of TCTC services in: (1) creating better jobs; (2) expanding the IT training opportunities; (3) promoting IT entrepreneurship; (4) encouraging telecommuting; and (5) promoting and developing incubation for IT related businesses.
12. Experience Works (previously Green Thumb) Rural Revitalization through Technology (RRT) has been an important part of TCTC in bringing the IT training to rural areas for adult population (See Appendix 4).

Less Measurable Achievements

1. Developing community support for job development through information technology.
2. Broadening partnership with the adjoining counties and communities for IT training and joint project sponsorship such as East Central Technology Corridor, which will be expanded in the future.
3. Recognition of TC as a center for training and education for businesses, groups and organization for promoting economic opportunities in the region. (See Appendix 9 for Letters of Support).

4. Partnership with IT/communication businesses such as Polar Communications Inc. and Halstad Telephone Company to expand Internet services to all parts of the county.
5. Long-term economic impact in the service area providing more and better jobs, larger tax base and expanded services.
6. Networking with ITCND
7. Networking with other rural technology centers such as Maddock and Stanton.

2001-2002 Work Elements

The work elements are listed below and the achievements are documented in italics.

1. Bring in new businesses to fill the 7 spaces available in the TC Incubator including new and existing IT related businesses. Primary criteria for selecting these businesses include: (a) adaptability to MSU Campus setting; (b) employment of MSU students and community residents; (c) promote entrepreneurship and sharing of resources.
 - a. *Between 11-01 to 9-02, one more IT-related business became a tenant in the TCTC and an existing tenant began occupying additional space. Firefly began occupying TCTC space (West Hall) in December 01. Firefly is a husband and wife who moved from New York but continued employment with their NY employers. Mrs. Magidson is a computer consultant, and Mr. Magidson is a textile designer. In August 2002, they were able to 'graduate' from the TCTC and now occupy their own office space in the community. Their TCTC space is now available for rental again. An existing tenant, Valley Computer Systems, needed more space for expansion, so now occupies three offices in Berg Hall. As of September 2002, seven office suites are available. Since the 2002 evaluation, the remodeling of Berg Hall is completed and a large space is being used for workshops, training, meetings, etc. It is being shown to prospective tenants that need a large, open space for their workforce. As MSU, in a nearby building, will provide good space for meetings, training sessions and workshops.*

2. Bring at least two IT related businesses to TC Incubator.

a. *As noted above, Firefly came into the TCTC in December 2001 but graduated in August 2002 and moved into its own space in the community.*

3. Hold at least three workshops at beginning, intermediate and advanced levels; including special niches such as parents/children Internet use, family/business research, IT related group and organizational meetings, teleconferencing and computer training for fun.

a. *A total of eight workshops were held to meet the needs for beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of IT training. TCTC held eight workshops in 2001-2002 with 92 persons attending and 14 workshops in 2000-2001 with 141 persons attending. In a two-year period 233 persons received training in basic computers, e-mail, Excel, Internet, Power Point, desktop publishing, and Microsoft Word (See Table 4).*

Table 4

TCTC Workshops Attendance

Class	2000-2001		2001-2002		Total #	
	# Workshops	# Attend.	# Workshops	# Attend.	Workshops	# Attend.
Basic	3	30	2	18	5	48
Email	4	43	2	26	6	69
Excel	1	10	-	-	1	10
Internet	3	36	2	26	5	62
Power Point	1	3	-	-	1	3
Publish	-	-	1	17	1	17
Word	2	19	1	5	3	24
Total	14	141	8	92	22	233

Source: TCTC and Appendix 5

4. Community Awareness and Support

a. Hold open houses in early 2002

i. *TCTC Open House was held in June 2002, with about 45 people attending short program and tour of the facilities.*

b. Conduct special tours for school children, parents, and businesses.

i. *Tours for the area community people (approximately 35 people) took place during an un-related campus event. A high school technology class (10 students) from Langdon, ND, and their instructor, toured and gathered info for a community project to establish a technology center. Group of over 15 ND state legislators toured the TCTC and were presented with tenant and facility info and conducted QA session. State League of Cities meeting (20 participants) took place in the TCTC and tours were provided. Mayville-Portland EDC met on campus and toured the TCTC (16 members). Newly formed East Central Technology Council, along with state Dept. of Commerce staff, as well as local, county and regional economic development officials, and some area news reporters, were hosted by the TCTC on campus (and provided tours) as a part of a marketing assistance presentation to the county EDC.*

c. Promote TC facilities as a center for meetings for education, training and business community meetings.

i. *Local Women's Club held a monthly meeting in the TCTC and toured. Campus faculty and staff have been invited to utilize the TCTC for meetings and other resources. As mentioned above, statewide organizations, such as League of Cities have been alerted to the availability of the TCTC for meetings and conferences.*

d. Establish computer-training sessions for groups, organizations and individuals.

i. *Community workshops are taking place throughout the year (see # 3 above for data)*

e. Establish a weekly/monthly evening open house to encourage businesses/entrepreneurs to use the TC facilities.

i. *Discussions taking place for setting up a business development resource center.*

5. Develop/expand partnerships among local, regional and statewide organizations.

a. Lake Agassiz Group (Lake Agassiz Regional Council, Lake Agassiz Regional Development Corporation and Lake Agassiz Housing Corporation).

- i. *Jay Henrickson is on the executive board of Lake Agassiz Regional Development Commission and Lake Agassiz Housing Commission. Recent discussions re LEADERS Act that Sen. Conrad is working on. Have suggested a partnership with LARDC that would benefit both parties if LEADERS Act is passed. LEADERS Act would provide funding to encourage and support colleges and universities doing business incubation and would encourage partnerships with regional incubators (Like Lake Agassiz Regional Development Commission's in Fargo).*
- b. Initiate programs to connect all communities in Traill County with toll free phone.
 - i. *TCTC involvement has been to take pro-active role in gaining as much technology advantage as possible. Toll-free phone is here for the customers of Polar and Halstad Companies. TCTC staff took the lead in bringing Polar to the community.*
- c. Initiate program to formalize partnership with all communities in Traill County for economic development through information technology process.
 - i. *It is being pursued through Traill County Economic Development Commission.*
- d. Develop partnership with economic development entities in Traill County for the use of TC and sharing of projects.
 - i. *The TCTC partnerships with May-Port EDC and Traill County EDC has been essential to the success of TCTC. Also, as prospective tenants are identified, EDCs are kept in the loop about the progress of those negotiations, and have even been asked, in at least one instance, to provide additional incentives that may interest that prospect.*
- e. To develop a regional IT partnership with Griggs and Steele Counties including the Griggs-Steele Empowerment Zone.
 - i. *East Central Technology Council was formed and opportunities for future training and incubation look very good. (See Appendix 2)*
- f. Promote and strengthen ITCND as a networking and promotion group to develop a regional technology center.

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write up*

- i. *Jay Henrickson has been an active participant in ICTCND activities/conferences, making ITCND members very aware of the existence of TCTC as a key technology center in its region. ICTCND has urged the creation of regional councils to support ICTCND efforts.*
- g. Promote and develop partnership with other technology centers in North Dakota for exchanges of ideas and joint programming.
 - i. *Relationship established with Technology Centers at Maddock and Stanton. That relationship has been solidified through TCTC work on the RRT project, which had participants who worked on those 2 centers. Idea exchange is ongoing; joint programming could come with IP Video capabilities as an outgrowth of HOV activities.*
- h. Promote and strengthen partnership with the Greater North Dakota Association for more aggressive local/regional economic development and information technology expansion.
 - i. *Jay Henrickson was active in GNDA 'New Economy Initiative' during 2000-2002. ITCND is holding its annual education conference in conjunction with GNDA's conference in October 2002. Mr. Henrickson is on a panel during the conference. He also met with the ND state director of GNDA in 2000, as he initiated a process for the May-Port EDC to lead a campaign to establish a Chamber of Commerce in Mayville-Portland Area.*
- i. Develop partnership with the North Dakota Information Technology Department to strengthen statewide IT program.
 - i. *TCTC relationship with ND IT is good. Mr. Henrickson has met and talked with ND IT Director, Curt Wolfe a number of times. Mr. Wolfe is a fellow member of ITCND. ECTC also enlisted the aid of Mr. Wolfe in August to participate in a conference call with our telecom provider and a representative from ND Dept. of Commerce. The call was in regard to a business prospect for the TCTC, and some connectivity issues that needed state intervention. Mr. Wolfe was able to provide the necessary insight and support to solve the problem.*

- j. To utilize the Green Thumb RRT Program (Experience Works) for additional IT training for senior citizens.
 - i. *TCTC staff have discussed with Experience Works (formerly Green Thumb) who has expressed strong support to continue working with TCTC on future projects.*
 - ii. *TCTC trained 50 adults where as the goal was 30. Participants were all from communities of less than 5,000 people; lived in 6 counties, in 19 communities. Participants surveyed indicated that over 80% of them were satisfied or very satisfied with the training and the program.*
- k. To expand funding program by reaching out to outside private fund sources including North Dakota Agencies and programs.
 - i. *TCTC has secured a US DOL grant for 2003-2005. Have provided to Experience Works national office key ND RRT data that may positively impact future RRT funding. Mr. Henrickson reviews federal funding opportunities weekly. He also keeps local EDC informed of TCTC activities.*
- 6. Search for resources to upgrade facilities for training and teleconferencing in the Technology Center. Complete Phase III of renovation of TCTC.
 - a. *With the completion of the large training/conference area in Berg Hall, the renovation is complete.*
- 7. Search for additional funding sources including establishment of a non-profit corporation 501c (3) or the like, to tap all potential private/public sources
 - a. *Currently, TCTC is a part of the MSU ITS Dept. Some initial research has been done by MSU administration to determine similarities between TCTC and organizations like EERC at UND. Those discussions have led us to favor the establishment of a 501c(3) to facilitate TCTC funding in the future.*
- 8. Develop a business plan for TCTC and assist in preparing business plan for IT related businesses coming into the incubator facility.
 - a. *TCTC business plan is in process (proposed budget is in close to final draft form). Mr. Henrickson is working with a student group that is developing a business*

plan for their proposed business. He is also gathering information and materials to establish a business development center in the TCTC. Resources would come from SBA, SBDC, etc. Some initial seminars and training could be facilitated through those established organizations.

9. Develop a comprehensive process for implementing the TC Strategic Plan and business plan.
 - a. *The strategic plan is in progress (Appendix 6). This plan will be tested, refined and expanded in the future.*
10. Develop an entrepreneurship with MSU Business Department by utilizing the TC facilities to train and encourage interested MSU students in invention, business innovation and entrepreneurship.
 - a. *MSU students are currently working on a proposed business; major entrepreneurship focus with Business Division is written into upcoming DOL grant; brief discussions were held recently with UND officials.*
11. Develop and implement a program for review and evaluation of incubated businesses.
 - a. *During October and November 2002, Mr. Henrickson will be discussing and implementing an evaluation program with first incubated tenants.*

Five Year Action Plan (2002-2007)

1. Prepare a Comprehensive Strategic Plan for 2002-2007 including objectives and policies to:
 - a. Address the needs of businesses for incubation and beyond. Develop policies for business retention in TC incubator and evaluation process.
 - b. Examine opportunities for transitioning mature businesses that have completed incubation at TCTC.

- c. Develop a long range financing plan and sources of funds for TC incubator and TC staff.
- d. Formulate measurable objectives for TC economic self-sufficiency.
- e. Promote development of regional and state plan for state financial assistance to Technology Center in North Dakota.
- f. Promote and participate in development of a statewide IT plan through the State of North Dakota Board of Higher Education.
- g. Continue the community awareness and support program.
- h. Continue and strengthen partnership among Mayville State University, local, regional and statewide organizations including:
 - Lake Agassiz Group
 - All local communities in Traill County
 - Griggs and Steele Counties
 - Cass and Grand Forks Counties
 - The works undertaken under 2001-2002 Work Program
 - Identify the key elements of the work program by year
 - Implement the TC Annual Work Programs and TC Strategic Plan

This planning process is ongoing. The overall plan may take 2-3 years to develop since the system is still new and subject to many changes. The present plan under Appendix 6 will be used and refined over time.

2. Action Plan for 2002-2007

- a. Determine the needed levels of IT training for incubated businesses.
- b. Determine the needed levels of IT training for non-incubated businesses.

c. Broaden and formalize partnerships in the county, region and state with technology centers and economic development organizations.

d. Develop a TC Business Assistance Program through TC EDC or independently.

Discussions are held to determine the scope of the plan and availability of resources.

3. Establish a financial organization to develop a pool of funds from private sources, 501c(3) type. Promote designation of a grant writer at MSU.

Several avenues for funding are being examined. Outside dollars are needed for expansion of the programs.

4. Develop a formal entrepreneurial system for involving MSU students in Technology Center.

Space is made available to MSU students. This effort will continue.

5. Explore feasibility of establishing a Technology Park on MSU Campus.

A more appropriate approach at this time is to build another facility to complement the TCTC space after the present incubator is fully occupied.

6. Promote development of a housing plan for May-Port and other communities through Traill County EDC.

Discussions are held with community officials. Plan for housing is pending resources. Housing sites are under consideration.

7. Develop annual work program before the beginning of each program year.

Will be initiated in the fall 2002.

8. Conduct annual evaluation of the Technology Center and revise plan elements annually, as needed.

This is a continuing process to measure TCTC accomplishments and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programs.

The five-year action plan will be periodically reviewed to make adjustment for anticipated changes and emerging situation.

Community Response

General Survey

A survey of the community leaders representing business, education, government and health care addressing 22 areas of community/regional impacts offers strong support and evaluation of the TCTC. Within a range of 1-5 points (one being the very low and five the very high), the respondents ranked TCTC impacts very high as shown in Table 5. The responses indicate a success in enhancement of: economic development (91%); information and communication serviced (91%); employment opportunities (90%); long-term telecommunication needs (100%); population growth (81%); and rural development (100%). Similarly, the respondents indicated that TCTC in the past three years has been instrumental in improving: business recruitment (100%); business retention (63%); communication among governmental units (81%); business climate (91%); community and area identity (91%); community and area quality of life (91%); community and area support for information technology (91%); community and university partnership (91%); interest in community and area planning (91%); networking among businesses (63%); investment opportunities in community and area (91%); public involvement in economic development (63%); perception about rural development (54%); relationship between business and government (91%); training and learning opportunities (100%); and university and community relations (91%).

Table 5
Final Trail County Technology Center Evaluation
September 13, 2002

Areas of Impact	1	2	3	4	5
Enhanced Community/Area Economic Development		9%		18%	73%
Enhanced Community/Area Information and Communication Services			9%	9%	82%
Enhanced Employment Opportunities			9%	45%	45%
Enhanced Long-term Community/Area Telecommunication Needs				9%	91%
Enhanced Population Growth in Community/Area			18%	45%	36%
Enhanced Rural Development				73%	27%
Improved Business Recruitment				45%	55%
Improved Business Retention			36%	18%	45%
Improved Communication Among Units of Government			18%	36%	45%
Improved Community/Area Business Climate			9%	36%	55%
Improved Community/Area Identity		9%		27%	64%
Improved Community/Area Quality of Life		9%		82%	9%
Improved Community/Area Support for Information Technology		9%		9%	82%
Improved Community/University Partnership		9%		9%	82%
Improved Interest in Community/Area Planning			9%	82%	9%
Improved Networking Among Businesses		9%	27%	27%	36%
Improved Opportunities for Investment in Community/Area			9%	64%	27%
Improved Public Participation in Economic Development		9%	27%	45%	18%
Improved Public Perception about Rural Development		9%	36%	36%	18%
Improved Relationship Between Government and Businesses			9%	64%	27%
Improved Training and Learning Opportunities				18%	82%
Strengthened University-Community Relations		9%		9%	82%

1= Very Low, 2=Low, 3=Average, 4=High, 5=Very High

Detailed Survey

A group of selected community leaders very familiar with TCTC ranked the overall functions and activities in the following sections (See Appendix 7). The ranking is as follows: 1=Very Low, 2=Low, 3=Average, 4=High, 5=Very High.

Planning

Nearly all respondents ranked the budgeting/finance, organization, partnership and community support at high (50%) and very high level (50%).

Planning Activities for TCTC	1	2	3	4	5
a. Budgeting/Financing				67%	33%
b. Organization				50%	50%
c. Partnership				50%	50%
d. Community Support				50%	50%

Task Assessment

With the exception of recruitment program ranking 17%, as average and 83% as high, all other tasks undertaken by TCTC were ranked high and very high. The effective training program of TCTC was ranked very high by nearly all respondents, as did the TCTC staff. The quality of the incubation facility, IT related the majority of the respondents' ranked equipment and networking with area businesses very high.

Outcome of tasks undertaken by TCTC	1	2	3	4	5
a. Quality of incubation physical facility				33%	67%
b. Improvement schedule of the facility				50%	50%
c. Quality of technology related equipment				33%	67%
d. Recruitment program			17%	83%	
e. Networking with local/regional businesses				33%	67%
f. Overall TCTC Training Program				17%	83%
g. Staffing of TCTC programs					11%
h. Marketing				83%	17%

TCTC Services

There was no disagreement among the respondents regarding the education benefits at the college level in contrast to the high school level. The alliance between the school districts, particularly the Heart of the Valley Consortium will, in the coming years, enhance the benefits

significantly, as the transition for IT training takes place at 11th and 12th grades in high schools. The respondents consistently rank high the IT infrastructure, community outreach and business outreach.

Overall quality of TCTC services	1	2	3	4	5
a. IT infrastructure				67%	33%
b. Community outreach				67%	
c. Business outreach				67%	
d. Educational benefits for High School level		17%	17%	50%	17%
e. Educational benefits for College level				17%	83%

Partnership

Partnership has been one of the strongest features in formation and management of TCTC. All of the respondents recognize its value and are cognizant of the importance of partnership with TCTC if the technology center in a rural setting is to succeed.

Partnership with and community support for TCTC	1	2	3	4	5
a. Partnership with May-Port EDC					100%
b. Partnership with School District				33%	67%
c. Partnership with MSU					100%
d. Partnership with Traill County EDC					100%
e. Multi-county partnership				83%	17%

Training Program

On-site training and the quality of training rank high, but the respondents indicate a need for improving the TCTC training program for off-site training and self-training for business/individuals. This should be addressed for the convenience of the workers in their respective communities.

TCTC training program	1	2	3	4	5
a. On-site training				17%	67%
b. Off-site training				33%	
c. Quality of the Training Staff				17%	67%
d. Self Training program for businesses/individuals				33%	
e. How does TCTC Program compare with other similar programs in ND?			17%	33%	17%

Location for Economic Development

TCTC by virtue of being located on MSU campus and having access to the technical and professional resources of the university is in an ideal position to implement its programs for business training, incubation and business development. It has been instrumental in bringing a toll free telephone system and broadband Internet to the area. It has been successful in establishing an alliance with Griggs-Steele County's Empowerment Zone and also beginning a dialog with other counties for further cooperation in training and business development assistance.

TCTC location for Economic Development	1	2	3	4	5
a. MSU Campus				17%	83%
b. Mayville/Traill County				33%	67%
c. Tri-County (Griggs, Steele, Traill Counties) area			17%	33%	50%
d. East Central ND				50%	50%

Economic Impact

Thus far the most economic impact of the TCTC has been in the Mayville-Portland area. TCTC has been instrumental for creating 22-25 jobs during 2001-2002 years with an average annual payroll of \$550,000-\$625,000. This overall economic impact translates into 25 direct jobs and 25 indirect jobs with a \$2 million dollar impact in 2002 alone. In the foreseeable future, this economic impact is anticipated to also take root in other communities in Traill County and also

in Griggs-Steele County, to the west, with an Empowerment Zone designation that is able to attract businesses by virtue of its financial resources and tax incentive authority.

The economic impact of TCTC	1	2	3	4	5
a. May-Port area				17%	83%
b. Other communities			33%	67%	
c. Traill County				50%	50%
d. Tri-County (Griggs, Steele, Traill) area			17%	83%	

TCTC Sustainability

TCTC is currently a department within the MSU system. Although, there is only a half time director and ¼ time administrative assistant responsible for all functions of TCTC, efforts are underway to build the resources up through grants/aids from the state and federal government within the next three years. Several options including a 501c(3) status are being explored at this time. TCTC has good general support of MSU administration and community (See Letters of Support, Appendix 9). In addition, since it has become a policy of the ND Board of Higher Education to directly involve North Dakota colleges and universities in economic development, it is likely that some special funding may be available to MSU for assuming early leadership in IT training and having TCTC as a component of its academic/community relations program. (Appendix 8)

Sustainability of TCTC within the next 5 years	1	2	3	4	5
a. Relationship with MSU				17%	83%
b. Relationship with other partners			17%	33%	50%
c. Outside financing			33%	67%	
d. Self-Sufficiency by 2007			17%	83%	

Additional Comments

Please feel free to make any comments and suggestions for the future of TCTC.

1. Problems/obstacles related to any of the areas listed above or other areas as you see them
 - a. *Difficulties encountered (not necessarily obstacles) have included state policies that need updating to reflect the current needs of incubators on college campuses. Ongoing difficulties (at least in the short term) will be funding and tenant recruitment.*
 - b. *Funding will be an ongoing issue for TCTC.*
 - c. *Continued funding for personnel may present a problem. It is hard to generate enough income in the beginning years to pay for the support*
 - d. *Fund raising for personnel cost and office expenses, especially between grants, is an area of concern.*
2. The future sustainability of TCTC
 - a. *Sustainability will depend on successful fundraising and recruitment. Status of being a "department" of MSU improves the sustainability.*
 - b. *With continued support of MSU and the other partners, the TCTC should be able to be maintained.*
 - c. *The facilities are in place. If the future administration of MSU continues to be interested in this venture, it should remain open.*
3. Changes in the future services of TCTC
 - a. *Future services will include a business development center that will be a resource center on-site and online. Special emphasis will be on entrepreneurship resources. Additional training services may be offered, depending on outside funding.*
 - b. *Hopefully the TCTC is able to generate enough income to retain staffing at current levels, or improve on it. If the funding for staff is cut, then it will be hard for the TCTC to grow, and that is what needs to happen.*
 - c. *The need for staff (internal or external) to assist prospective start ups with business plans, etc.*
4. Establishing a broader technology center including access information exchange.
 - a. *This is all possible, but relies on people and money to do it.*
5. Establishing an employment and job training network
 - a. *That is slowly developing, somewhat informally, through our administration of the RRT project and the network that was developed because of it. Also, our relationships with ECTC and others around the state may increase the likelihood of such a network (although it would be mostly job training related, not employment related).*

- b. *Not sure how far the TCTC should go with some of this unless funds exist for appropriate staffing.*
 - c. *With DOL grant, any future Experience Works Program (RRT) or other funding, this is possible.*
 - d. *This has already been happening. Hopefully the RRT Project will be funded again. This will provide many training opportunities.*
6. *What other activities do you foresee within the next 5 years, (2002-2007) for TCTC?*
- a. *For the first couple of years, we will concentrate on carrying out the activities of a US DOL training grant that will focus on entrepreneurship and jobs development in our service region. Recruitment will be ongoing during the next 5 years, with extra effort being given to recruiting and assisting students. A strong presence on campus will be one of our goals. Fundraising will also be a prime focus of ours. Establishing a foundation will be an integral part of this. The strategic development plan will be ongoing and reviewed yearly*
 - b. *I would be hopeful that the TCTC would be able to expand in the upper level of Berg Hall, and perhaps to build their own building in the community, or on the campus. The EDCs have expressed an interest in this type growth. If we have the companies here that need the space, I am sure it could be accomplished.*
 - c. *Continued recruitment of businesses to be housed in the TCTC to help make TCTC self-sufficient.*
 - d. *Further grant writing; more partnerships; more services to assist business startups & maybe local small businesses.*
7. *What specific activities do you recommend for 2002-2003?*
- a. *Work on securing one new business for the TCTC with employees that work in the TCTC and out of their homes.*
 - b. *Secure enough funding to sustain the staffing of the TCTC.*
 - i. *Grant writing*
 - ii. *Assistance for startups with business plans*
 - iii. *Aggressively pursue startups and expansions of businesses to the TCTC.*
 - c. *Recruitment of one or two new businesses to locate in the TCTC. Expansion of any training opportunities.*
 - d. *Getting a good start on the DOL grant. Developing specific guidelines for tenant application, rent structures, assistance into the community, and any needed TCTC policies. We will also need to work closely with other North Dakota University System institutions to provide input to state policies that may develop during the upcoming legislative session.*

APPENDICES

TRAIL COUNTY TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Final Evaluation

Technology Opportunities Program

Mayville State University

Appendix 1

Completed Tasks

December 1999-September 2002

TRAIL COUNTY TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Appendix 1

COMPLETED TASKS TRAILL COUNTY TECHNOLOGY CENTER December 1999-September 2002

Date Tasks

Dec-99 First Phase of Business Incubator in West Hall making 12 office suites available
Dec-99 Completion of Minor renovation for the Training Center
Jan-00 Instruction began in the Training Center in TCTC
Feb-00 Installation of the network (Phase 1) in TCTC
Feb-00 Purchase and installation of the network and proxy servers
Feb-00 Broadband connection to TCTC
Mar-00 Monthly meeting with outside incubators
Mar-00 First tenant in TCTC, ComMark
Mar-00 Purchase and installation of digital telephone switchpack, telephone sets and cabling
Mar-00 Monthly meeting with outside evaluator
May-00 Attended state level meetings related to telecommunications as an on-going activity
May-00 Established training center schedule for summer of 2000
Jun-00 Policies and guidelines to govern operation of TCTC
Jun-00 Submitted no-cost revisions to grantor for a half-time TCTC Director
Jul-00 Consulting with the businesses located in TCTC business incubator
Jul-00 Workforce survey for Traill County and service area of 35-40 miles around May-Port Community
Jul-00 Hired a half-time Director for TCTC
Jul-00 Developed promotional/informational materials for TCTC
Aug-00 Internship established for MSU students in Information Technology Businesses in TCTC
Aug-00 Report on businesses located in the business incubator
Aug-00 Establish training center schedule for fall 2000
Sep-00 Students employed by businesses in TCTC
Sep-00 Purchased and installed telephone service for Phase II of TCTC
Sep-00 Hired an administrative assistant for TCTC
Sep-00 Reserved URLs for TCTC web presence
Nov-00 Established a web site for TCTC
Nov-00 Established training center schedule for Spring 2001
Dec-00 Worked with telecommunication companies on fees and broadband flexibility
Dec-00 Installation of Phase II network in TCTC
Dec-00 Report on the number and type of training in the Training Center
Dec-00 Broadband needs for TC and increased T1
Mar-01 Established a training contract with Green Thumb Inc. to facilitate IT related training in rural areas
May-01 Established training center schedule for Summer 2001
May-01 Work with communication companies on fees and broadband installation.
Jun-01 Completion of minor renovation for Phase II of TCTC
Jun-01 Met with project Evaluator and established review base line
Jul-01 Met for evaluation of project by an outside evaluator
Jul-01 Established training center schedule for Fall 2001
Aug-01 Worked with outside consultant for project evaluation
Sep-01 Worked with outside consultant for project evaluation
Dec.-01 Established training center schedule for Spring 2002
Dec.-01 Completion of the year two evaluation by an outside consultant

Date Tasks

- Dec-02 Status Report on the Green Thumb, Rural Revitalization through Technology
- Mar-02 Completion of minor renovation for Phase III of TCTC
- Mar-02 Status Report on the Green Thumb, Rural Revitalization through Technology
- Mar-02 Report on Progress with telecommunication companies on fees and flexibility of broadband
- May-02 Established training center schedule for summer 2002
 - Discussions to determine the feasibility of creating a non-profit foundation for the long term
- May-02 financing of TCTC
- May-02 Developed marketing packet for the East Central ND Technology Corridor
- Jul-02 Meeting with outside evaluator
- Sept.-02 Meeting with outside evaluator
- Sept.-02 Report on Progress with telecommunication companies on fees and flexibility of broadband
- Sept.-02 Green Thumb, Inc. proposal-RRT Program, follow up with trainees and employees
- Sept.-02 Established training center schedule for fall 2002
- Sept.-02 Report on businesses located in the business incubator
- Sept.-02 Report on businesses located in the TCTC that are ready to move into the community
- Oct-02 Meeting with outside evaluator

Appendix 2

East Central Technology Council

TRAIL COUNTY TECHNOLOGY CENTER

East Central Technology Council



*Small Communities . . .
. . . Big Opportunities*

The East Central Technology Council is a regional chapter of the Information Technology Council of North Dakota, and encompasses the tri-county region of Griggs, Steele and Traill.

The purposes of the group are:

- ❑ to be actively involved in statewide and regional Information Technology (IT) issues
- ❑ to be an advocate for creating IT-related jobs in our region
- ❑ to assist regional businesses in 'best use' of IT for their growth and stability
- ❑ to promote our region's IT capabilities to the outside world
- ❑ to facilitate IT training in our region
- ❑ to encourage ongoing networking with alumni of our region who may want to 'come home'.

Comments/questions about [this website](#)

East Central Technology Council

Rural North Dakota is not just a great place to live. Businesses and workers using Information Technology in our 3-county region may have access to more IT infrastructure than their counterparts in some of the larger cities.

This is where you can find high-speed internet access of many types, a technologically advanced 'laptop' university, a skilled workforce, an IT business incubator, empowerment zone resources, and more.

High-speed Connectivity

This region is blessed with a wide range of broadband capabilities:

TI - available at a low cost in the Traill County Technology Center

DSL - for all of your business needs

Wireless - flexibility

Cable Modem - puts our residents on a fast track

Home to Mayville State University

A powerful regional asset for personal and professional growth, MSU offers four-year liberal arts and professional degrees.

Mayville State University was the fourth university in the country to provide notebook computers to all of its students, empowering them with the tools for our technology-driven economy.

Programs in computer information systems, e-business, project management, and information technology specializations provide skilled employees for information technology businesses. The university is home to the Traill County Technology Center, a business incubator for start-up and satellite enterprises that often hire students as highly skilled part-time workers. The university also partners with economic development agencies and area businesses to provide customized workforce training on campus or at the business.

University communities benefit from the number of arts and cultural events that a college brings. Mayville State offers many such events annually, including concerts and theater productions. Its sporting events are popular community gathering points, too. The university's athletic facilities are also available for public use.

Work Ethic & Technical Skills . . . what a combination!

Old-fashioned North Dakota work ethic . . . need we say more? In the ECTC, we also have a technically-skilled workforce and people that understand the needs of today's information technology professionals.



Business Incubator & Facilities for Business Startups or Expansions

The Traill County Technology Center (TCTC) is a business incubator that caters to startup and expanding companies that rely on Information Technology (IT) to do business. It also serves as a resource for information technology training for companies and the communities in the region. The TCTC is conveniently located on the campus of Mayville State University, giving resident businesses unique access to the technical skills of the student labor force. High-speed T1 network, affordable office space, and all the resources of a progressive University . . . you can't go wrong!

Empowerment Zone Provides Additional Resources

The Griggs-Steele Empowerment Zone, Inc., one of only 10 federally designated rural empowerment zone's nation-wide, covers all of Steele County, part of Griggs County, and includes Hannaford and Binford as developable sites. The EZ designation brings with it numerous tax incentives, including a \$3000 wage tax credit for qualified Zone businesses, an increased Section 179 (accelerated depreciation) deduction and tax exempt bond financing.

Three fully improved industrial parks and available office spaces in many of the Zone communities offer your business the opportunity of enjoying a unique quality of life while assuring you of the latest technology infrastructure.

For more information on the EZ, see www.griggs-steeleez.org.

Appendix 3

The Heart of the Valley ITV Consortium

TRAILL COUNTY TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Appendix 4

Experience Works, RRT Program

TRAIL COUNTY TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Green Thumb, Inc. is a national nonprofit corporation that provides training and employment assistance to thousands of people across the country.

The organization also works closely with employers who need skilled and reliable workers.

Working with members of Congress, the organization developed the Rural Revitalization through Technology initiative, administered by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Green Thumb, Inc. is recipient of a \$927,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor for the Rural Revitalization through Technology (RRT) program in Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, and North Dakota. While Green Thumb's participation is 100% funded by the federal grant, other resources are being contributed through public/private partnerships.

Contact Information

Iowa

Green Thumb, Inc.
(515) 243-2430

Minnesota

Green Thumb, Inc.
(218) 822-3150

Montana

Green Thumb, Inc.
(406) 761-4821

Nebraska

Green Thumb, Inc.
(402) 465-5545

North Dakota

Green Thumb, Inc.
c/o Traill County Technology Center
(701) 786-4899

Charlie Bryson, Project Manager
Green Thumb, Inc.
e-mail: charlie_bryson@greenthumb.org

Green Thumb, Inc. is a
Proud Member of America's
Workforce Network

Rural Revitalization Through Technology

computer training
new skills
new jobs
new employers
new employers



Rural Revitalization through technology the advantages...



- Provides training and employment opportunities for rural residents.
 - Increases the pool of newly trained high-tech or information technology skilled workers in rural areas.
 - Upgrades incumbent workers' technology skills.
 - Brings new income opportunities to farm families.
 - Attracts new businesses to rural areas.
 - Helps to stop out migration of skilled rural workers.
 - Encourages local high school and college graduates to find good jobs in their hometowns.
 - Expands and integrates technology into America's rural heartland.
 - Forges public/private alliances that help sustain economic growth in rural areas.
- Operated by Green Thumb, Inc.

Rural Revitalization Through Technology

*ALL the advantages...
right in your own backyard.*

employees

If you live in a rural area and are looking for work, you may be eligible to receive valuable free training and employment assistance.

Green Thumb is recruiting rural residents who want jobs requiring technology skills.

A variety of new career opportunities await people who acquire the new technology skills needed in today's economy.



employers

Are you an employer located in a rural area? Do you need to recruit new technologically skilled employees? Or upgrade the skills of your existing employees? You could qualify for training grants through an innovative program available to employers in this state.

Green Thumb's Rural Revitalization through Technology program, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, provides resources to help employers recruit, train, retrain, and retain people in their communities.

- ◆ Attract and retain skilled employees.
- ◆ Save money on employee recruitment and training.
- ◆ Secure training customized to your specific needs.
- ◆ Revitalize your local community.
- ◆ Play a leadership role in cutting edge rural workforce development.

"The Green Thumb Rural Revitalization program is a valuable recruitment tool for us. We have consultants with much experience and financial support to train and assist those individuals in rural areas who need training and employment opportunities. Modest is pleased to be part of an arrangement that helps us find and train employees, and we look forward to facilitating new career opportunities for more people in our rural communities.

*Hlsa Riechmann, Program Director,
McQuist, Inc., Williston, ND*

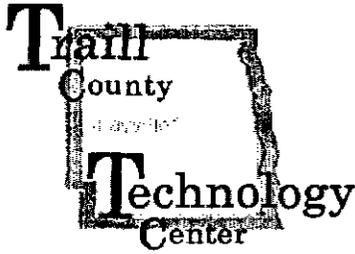
ANY EMPLOYER is eligible to apply for a Rural Revitalization Grant. The basic guideline is that the employer must identify a need for technology training and make a hiring commitment after successful completion of the training. The grants may also be used to upgrade the skills of existing workers.

Application forms and information are available from your state Green Thumb office listed on the back of this brochure.

Appendix 5

Workshop and Training Evaluations

TRAIL COUNTY TECHNOLOGY CENTER



Course Evaluation

Thank you for your interest in this Trail County Technology Center course. We appreciate your comments and suggestions as they help us to plan future courses. Please take the time to fill out this evaluation form.

1. Were you satisfied with the class?
Yes No

2. Was the class worth the time and the money?
Yes No

Please circle the appropriate grade and provide comments if necessary.

3. Was the instructor well prepared for the class?
A B C D F

4. Did the instructor stimulate interest?
A B C D F

5. Did the instructor make efficient use of class time?
A B C D F

6. Did the instructor cover the material promised?
A B C D F

7. What did you like about the class?

8. What suggestions or changes do you have for this course?

9. Ideas or types of classes you would like to see offered through the Technology Center in the future.

10. How did you hear of this class being offered?

Other Comments: