

WinstonNet Bridges the Digital Divide

Founded in 2001 by the !dealliance, WinstonNet, Inc. is a non-profit community technology initiative established with the goal of “bridging the digital divide” by providing community computer access in recreation centers and churches and preparing the workforce for the next generation of network-based super computing technologies. Striving to be a prototype for the nation, WinstonNet uses cutting edge technology throughout Forsyth County to set the standard for ubiquitous computing, a process that integrates computer technology with everyday objects and activities.

WinstonNet has built the city/county technology infrastructure to support and effectively maintain numerous technology centers across the county, including the establishment of more than 40 computer labs that offer free high speed access to the Internet and the latest Microsoft applications.

“Sometime in the late 1990s, several local organizations and city leaders realized there was a deep divide within our community in terms of access to computer-based tools,” WinstonNet president John Boehme said. “WinstonNet was born out of that thought process and today works as a collaborative project of local government, numerous education institutions and the Chamber of Commerce.”

In September, WinstonNet announced that it received a \$36,000 grant from the Charles Babcock, Jr. Discretionary Fund of The Winston-Salem Foundation. The grant will allow WinstonNet to continue the services of an information technology project manager to complete an upgrade and expansion of its public access computer labs. In addition, WinstonNet was recently awarded a \$1.6 million federal grant to upgrade and expand its labs.

“We believe the services of WinstonNet are making a profound impact on our community and the people who live here,” he added. “Butler + Burke has been a great partner and supporter of the work of WinstonNet, specifically as it relates to our annual financial audit, as our role has evolved in recent years.”

Discover more about WinstonNet at www.winstonnet.org.