

Cumberland County

Executive Summary	2
Getting started	4
<i>County support</i>	4
<i>Technology Leadership Team recruitment</i>	4
Activities	5
<i>Technology Leadership Team meetings</i>	5
<i>Training efforts</i>	17
<i>Take Charge</i>	18
<i>Community network development</i>	22
<i>Community workshops and presentations</i>	22
<i>Publicity efforts</i>	23
Successes.....	25
<i>Statistics</i>	25
Obstacles	27
Lessons Learned	28
Thoughts from the TLT	32
Plans for the future	37
Appendix A – Recruitment material.....	38
Appendix B – Publicity.....	41
Appendix C – Benchmark/Assessment research	42
Appendix D – Executive summaries from all counties	43

Executive Summary

[intro paragraph]

County support and Technology Leadership Team recruitment

Following the securing of support from county officials, a list of potential members for the Technology Leadership Team was put together. People were selected based on knowledge of their interest in county activities. Eighteen people accepted the invitation and became a member of the initial Cumberland County Technology Leadership Team.

Technology Leadership Team activities

The Technology Leadership Team (TLT) met 13 times between October 13, 2002 and May 24, 2004.

The TLT received TOP related training on four occasions.

There have been eight Community Readiness Workshops in Cumberland County, some of them being 4-6 sessions in length.

At least eight articles have been published in the *Cumberland Bulletin* and *Farmville Herald* about this project.

Take Charge

Cumberland County's three *Take Charge* sessions were held on March 20, March 27, and April 3, 2003. Details of these sessions can be found in the Take Charge section of this document.

Successes

Cumberland County's main successes in this project have been securing retired VCE Agent Van Petty as the TLT leader, their initiative in developing community readiness workshops, and their use of the Community Connections and Virtual Business Incubator programs.

Obstacles

Though the TOP Project Management Committee has not been able to find any true obstacles to the project in Cumberland County, the TLT has expressed a need to find more diverse TLT membership and a desire to better market the web site and entice Cumberland County residents to use it.

Lessons Learned

This is a compilation of lessons learned about this project from experiences in all the counties involved in this grant.

Thoughts from the TLT

Feedback from the TLT was collected at a TLT meeting on February 11, 2004, as well as through a later email.

Plans for the future

Cumberland County is planning extensive efforts to market the Cumberland First web site and entice county residents to use it more. Additionally, they are planning to assist with a new grant that has been received by the county school system.

Getting started

County support

The Cumberland County Board of Supervisors and Administrators, listed below, were contacted about the project and expressed their approval with a letter of commitment.

Cumberland County Board of Supervisors

Juanita M. Urban, Chair
Ray Wooten, Vice Chair
L. Tom Murray
R. Phil Scarborough, Jr.
Elbert R. Womack

Cumberland County Administrators

- Judy Hollifield, County Administrator
- Sherry Swinson, Assistant County Administrator/Economic Development Director

Cumberland County's letter of commitment can be found in Appendix A of this document.

Technology Leadership Team recruitment

Retired Cumberland County Extension Agent Van Petty met with the Cumberland County Administrator, Judy Hollifield, and the Economic Development Director, Sherry Swinson and put together a list of potential members for the Technology Leadership Team. They selected people based on knowledge of their interest in county activities. The list was divided and potential members were contacted by telephone and personal visits. A letter of invitation was sent to potential members from the County Administrator's office. Eighteen people accepted the invitation and became a member of the initial Cumberland County Technology Leadership Team.

A complete list of Cumberland County Technology Leadership Team members can be found in Appendix A of this document.

Activities

Technology Leadership Team meetings

October 13, 2002 – Cumberland County Extension Office, Cumberland Courthouse (C.H.) – 7:00 pm

Present: 8 TLT members, Retired VCE Agent Van Petty, VCE Area Specialist Gary Larrowe, VCE Area Specialist Jon Johnson

The following topics were discussed at this initial meeting of the Cumberland County Technology Leadership Team:

- The TOP program includes 9 counties
- There was a request that Assistant County Administrator Sherry Swinson work on getting a representative from the Farmville Area Chamber of Commerce and IDA to attend the next meeting
- Getting participation from the Town of Farmville office and school board
- Possible items to include on the county web site:
 - Calendars
 - Elected officials
 - Contact information
 - County code
 - Employment applications
 - County office locations and brief description of duties
 - Building inspection fee schedule
 - Tax deadlines
 - Board minutes
- Check with County Administrator Judy Hollifield on the possibility of a county-wide technology survey, possibly using churches or non-profit organizations
- Check with the possibility of running lines in conduit with the water project
- The *Take Charge* program – Where are we now, where do we want to be, and how do we get there
- Get a list of civic organizations, government organizations, faith-based groups and businesses in the area
- Talk to Meade Jones (*The Cumberland Bulletin*) about the possibility of a free ad
- Create a technology survey for distribution to various groups

Finally, everyone was encouraged to visit the TOP web site, <http://top.bev.net>, for more information about the project.

**November 14, 2002 – Cumberland County Extension Office,
Cumberland C.H. – 7:00 pm**

Present: 6 TLT members, VCE Area Specialist Gary Larrowe, Retired VCE Agent Van Petty, VCE Area Specialist Jon Johnson

Several topics were discussed during this meeting. It was decided to conduct a business survey. TLT member Aaron Hickman agreed to draft the survey and mail it to the team for input. The Extension Office will send the surveys out to the business community in the month of December. It was also suggested that it would be helpful to know how many internet service providers there were in Cumberland County, and if any provide high-speed connections.

VCE Area Specialist Gary Larrowe stressed the importance of having broad community support for the TOP project, and suggested that members be recruited from unrepresented sectors of the community.

Finally, the *Take Charge* process was discussed, and it was decided to hold the three sessions at Cumberland High School during February or March, 2003.

**February 24, 2003 – Cumberland County Extension Office,
Cumberland C.H. – 7:00 pm**

Present: 7 TLT members, Retired VCE Agent Van Petty, VCE Area Specialist Jon Johnson

At this meeting, TLT members received their Community Networks training from Jon Johnson. TLT members were also asked to fill out their permission slips so they can be listed on the TOP web site.

The following actions were planned for the upcoming *Take Charge* process:

- Media promotion via The Farmville Herald and The Cumberland Bulletin newspapers, as well as WFLO and WVHL radio stations
- Development of a promotional flyer for schools and the community
- Mail invitation letters and brochure to all elected and appointed local government officials, churches and civic groups, businesses, and other community leaders
- TLT member Doris Seal and Van Petty agreed to ask three local restaurants from the northern, central, and southern part of the county to cater the meetings. Suggestions included Vito's, Merk's Place, and Ollie's Restaurant
- TLT member Jill Matthews agreed to provide folders for the session handouts
- Van Petty agreed to contact TLT members to serve as facilitators
- TLT member Doris Seal and Van Petty will contact civic groups to serve as hosts for registration. Suggestions included Cumberland Woman's Club, Cumberland Ruritans, and the Redbud Garden Club
- Get a local historian to speak at Session I "Where are we now?", and ask

Sherry Swinson to speak on economic development

There was some discussion on charging participants \$5.00 per session to attend the *Take Charge* sessions, to offset the cost of the meals. Van Petty stated that the Board of Supervisors has offered to cover the cost of meals and materials for up to 40 participants. Although the exact cost is not yet known, it was hoped that it would be in the \$1000 range. The Cumberland County Extension Office 4-H program agreed to provide the break refreshments and supplies.

It was decided to conduct a survey of churches and civic organizations similar to the survey taken of the business community in December. TLT member Aaron Hickman again agreed to draft the survey, and TLT member Jill Matthews offered to mail the survey to identified churches and civic organizations. The results will be presented at the March 20th session of the *Take Charge* program.

Finally, the TLT decided to conduct a "Name the Web Site" contest similar to the contest held in King & Queen County. Van Petty said he would find a \$100 sponsor for the contest and conduct a promotional program. One purpose of the contest is let county residents know about the upcoming web site.

May 15, 2003 – Cumberland County Extension Office, Cumberland C.H. – 7:00 pm

Present: 6 TLT members, Retired VCE Agent Van Petty, VCE Area Specialist Jon Johnson, TOP Project Coordinator Jaime Shetrone

Van Petty gave the results of the Cumberland Patriot Day voting by county residents for the web site name. The winning selection was "Cumberland First for Independence", by a 50 vote margin. The runner-up was "Patriot Place". Jovan Petty, an eighth-grader at Cumberland Middle School, submitted the winning entry and received a \$100 gift card donated by the Farmville Walmart store.

Jaime Shetrone and Jon Johnson led the TLT through the steps for designing the county's web page. After reviewing examples of several community web sites and a lot of discussion, the following topics were identified:

- People
- Village Mall
- Community
- Government
- Education/Libraries
- Recreation/Leisure Services
- Discussion Board
- Emergency Services
- Calendar

The following items were identified as Quick Links for the front page of the web site:

- Weather
- Obituaries
- Newspapers
- Directions
- Horoscope

Additionally, the TLT agreed upon a blue/gold color scheme and to rotate pictures of government buildings, schools, agriculture, historical interest, etc. on the web site.

TLT member Bruce Robinson offered to put together a User Agreement Statement for community groups and individuals that wish to host their web page with the community web site.

Van Petty will work with BEV to get a domain name for the Cumberland web site. Everyone agreed upon the domain name Cumberland First.net. It was suggested that the names Cumberland First.com and Cumberland First.org also be registered. There are costs associated with registering domain names, and Van said he would discuss the cost with the County Administrator, Judy Hollifield.

Finally, it was decided to hold workshops in the fall on the use of the community web pages and how to design a web page for businesses.

June 17, 2003 – Cumberland County Extension Office, Cumberland C.H. – 7:00 pm

Present: 13 TLT members, Retired VCE Agent Van Petty, VCE Area Specialist Jon Johnson

A copy of the user agreement drafted by TLT member Bruce Robinson was reviewed. There were no additions or corrections to the draft, and a copy will now be reviewed by a lawyer at Virginia Tech.

The following changes were suggested for the web site:

- Remove the “Photos” tab and insert photos throughout the web site
- Change “Village Mall” to “Local Business”
- Change “Villagers” to “Members” and remove all references to “Villagers”
- Change the “Become a Villager” button to “Become a Member”
- Remove “Community Groups” from the Quick Links section and replace with “Clubs”
- Remove “WRSC-TV” from the Quick Links
- Change “Things to Do” to “Sights & Attractions”
- Add “Youth” and “Seniors” tabs

Volunteering TLT members were assigned the following topics to gather content for:

- Marty Shute – research online web sites for sources of local obituaries

- Augustus Harper – Health
- Yvonne Earvin and Lois Lee – Calendar and Community Groups
- Linda Eanes, Jeremiah Heaton and Mary Lee Dimmie – Youth and Seniors
- Sherry Swinson and Jill Matthews – Government
- Van Petty, Jill Matthews and Anita French – Local Business
- Jo Smith and Gayle Thompson – Sights & Attractions
- Liz Jamerson, Doris Seal and Bruce Robinson – Education & Libraries

A deadline of July 8th was set for gathering this information.

July 16, 2003 – Cumberland County Extension Office, Cumberland C.H. – 7:00 pm

Present: 5 TLT members, Retired VCE Agent Van Petty, VCE Area Specialist Jon Johnson

All web site assignment committees reported and gave an update of their progress:

- Youth and Seniors – TLT member Jeremiah Heaton forwarded a copy of the youth directory. It contained useful information; however, it needed to be put in a format that could be used for the web page. TLT member Doris Seal agreed to format this information.
- Health and Emergency Services – TLT member Augustus Harper forwarded his completed assignment. TLT member Jo Smith gave an update on the list of doctors. Van Petty said he would inform TOP Project Coordinator Jaime Shetrone of the corrections.
- Education and Libraries – Doris Seal reported that their committee only needed to add the web links to their assignment. TLT member Bruce Robinson was working on getting the links.
- Sights & Attractions – Jo Smith and TLT member Gail Thompson gave an outline of their assignment. After discussion of the information needed, Gail and Jo agreed to continue working. TLT member Yvonne Earvin agreed to join this committee.
- Calendar and Community Groups – Yvonne Earvin gave a report of their assignment. Van informed Yvonne that the web page is designed for organizations and groups to input their own information, and apologized for not letting them know sooner.
- Local Business and Government – TLT member Anita French gave Van mailing labels for all businesses with a business license in Cumberland County. TLT member Jill Matthews has agreed to mail a letter with an application to county businesses and community groups to determine if they want to be listed on the county web site. Van asked Jon Johnson for an update on the status of the user agreement being reviewed by the Virginia Tech attorney. Jon suggested that Van follow up with TOP Project Associate Director Dr. Eleanor Schlenker.
- Local Obituaries – Van stated he would contact TLT member Marty Shute to

get his report.

Overall, it was determined that there was still work to be done to complete the assignments.

During the discussion of web page use, the following policies were adopted:

- Community web site members must post their information by a set date (to be determined) before it will be listed on the community calendar
- On a motion by Doris Seal and seconded by Gail Thompson, all web site members must be pre-approved prior to posting their information on the county web site

In the June meeting, the TLT discussed conducting workshops for local businesses and community groups who want a web site. The team also wants to conduct awareness workshops and promotions for the community web site. Jon Johnson mentioned several workshop ideas and agreed to assist with getting speakers. He also suggested that the TLT members with computer expertise conduct a workshop. Workshops suggested were:

- Introduction to the County Web Page
- Introduction to the Basic Computer
- Designing a Web Page
- Business Marketing
- Ag/Tourism (working with the Farm Bureau)

Each TLT member is encouraged to suggest workshops they feel will help county residents become familiar with the computer and the use of the Internet. They were also asked to consider being an instructor for a workshop if they have the expertise.

**August 27, 2003 – Cumberland County High School, Cumberland C.H.
– 7:00 pm**

Present: 10 TLT members, Retired VCE Agent Van Petty, VCE Area Specialist Jon Johnson, Blacksburg Electronic Village Staff Member Robert Roberts

Van Petty gave an update on the progress of the web site. The “Government” and “Seniors” information will be forwarded the first week of September, and TLT member Doris Seal agreed to find information for the “Youth” topic. Van said that once this information is provided, the site will be ready to go public.

Robert Roberts, from the Blacksburg Electronic Village, conducted a training session on how to use the calendar and discussion forum portions of the web site. This was a hands-on training that gave TLT members a chance to try out each tool.

After much discussion on the type of workshops to be conducted in the fall, it was decided to first have an introduction to the computer and web pages workshop. Jon

Johnson agreed to conduct this workshop with the help of others to be named later. The workshop was planned for September 18, 2003 at 7:00 pm, in the “Log Cabin” computer lab at Cumberland High School. This “Introduction to the Computer and Web Page Workshop” will target small business owners, churches, and civic groups with limited computer and web page skills. TLT members were encouraged to contact business owners, civic groups, or churches they know and invite them to the workshop. Space is limited to 15 participants.

Future workshops concerning making the county aware of the web site and how to use it were discussed.

TLT member Linda Eanes was thanked for providing refreshments, always a big hit with the TLT members.

September 30, 2003 – Cumberland High School, Cumberland C.H. – 7:00 pm

Present: 12 TLT members, Retired VCE Agent Van Petty, TOP Project Director Mathew Mathai, John Nichols of Virginia Tech

Mathew Mathai conducted training on how to use the three web site directories, People, Local Business, and Community Groups. TLT members practiced inputting information into the different directories. It was a very informative training, and provided useful information for the TLT members that will serve as web site administrators. TLT members Bruce Robinson, Jill Matthews, Linda Eanes, Marty Shute, Doris Seal, Yvonne Earvin and Van Petty agreed to serve as administrators.

The following are key points of the community web site discussion with Mathew Mathai:

- Virginia Tech’s support of the Cumberland County web site will end in 2005
- Jaime Shetrone’s position with the BEV as TOP Project Coordinator will end March 30, 2004
- User fees cannot be charged until after the grant ends
- Use of the Cumberland County web site directories by those outside the county must be approved by the TLT
- Grant funding is available for rescue squad buildings to have the Internet to support Homeland Security and Disaster Planning
- Technology should be replaced every five years
- The annual fee for community groups that want a web site hosted by BEV is \$20.00
- Businesses with five or fewer employees can receive free web site hosting from the BEV during the grant phase

John Nichols of Virginia Tech gave an overview of the vision, benefits, goals, strategies, etc. for the Technology Assessment and Master Plan that are a part of the TOP project. Each county participating will be responsible for gathering information for these pieces.

The TLT's first assignment was to gather exiting planning information and identify associated decision makers. The following TLT members agreed to be contacts:

- Elizabeth Jamerson – Education
- Jill Matthews – Government
- Van Petty – Community Groups

Van stated that he would identify people in the county to serve as contacts for the remaining positions.

Finally, Van announced that the Cumberland web site will go public in the first week of October.

October 15, 2003 – Cumberland High School, Cumberland C.H. – 6:00 pm

Present: 6 TLT members, Retired VCE Agent Van Petty

This meeting was specifically for those TLT members that volunteered to be administrators. The following work schedule was established:

- Weekdays – Jill Matthews
- Weekends (November) – Linda Eanes
- Weekends (December) – Bruce Robinson
- Weekends (January) – Marty Shute
- Weekends (February) – Doris Seal
- Weekends (March) – Van Petty
- Weekends (April) – Yvonne Earvin

Who is eligible for web site membership?

- All Cumberland County residents aged 14 (?) and above
- Any person who lives outside of Cumberland County but has a county-based business, organization, or church

Reasons for denying membership:

- Failing to follow the Cumberland web page agreement
- Aged 13 (?) and under

Additionally, the web site will be monitored for any other issues that need to be addressed.

Van Petty stated that he would forward these policy statements to the entire TLT for their input and approval.

December 2, 2003 – Cumberland High School, Cumberland C.H. – 6:00 pm

Present: 8 TLT members, Retired VCE Agent Van Petty

The administrator schedule and web site policies established at the last meeting were approved. Two more items were added to the list of who is eligible to become a member of the Cumberland County web site:

- All Cumberland County taxpayers
- Any person with a Cumberland County address who has a temporary address outside of Cumberland, such as a student or a soldier

The following changes were suggested for the web site:

- Add the due date for county stickers to the calendar
- Add the Board of Supervisor's agendas and minutes to the community web page – Van said he would work with the county office staff to implement this request
- Add a Quick Link to the front page for the county map
- Add new user's comments to the front page

TLT member Liz Jamerson stated that Southside Virginia Community College will conduct a web page design class for 13 or more people for \$64.75 per credit or non-credit. The TLT agreed to pursue this option for 2004.

The TLT also planned a four session workshop for interested businesses and community groups in the spring of 2004.

Van Petty stated that the public was not using the community calendar. It was agreed to encourage organizations, churches, etc. to submit dates of upcoming events.

After much discussion, it was agreed to contact local civic groups and businesses and offer web page presentations by TLT members. Liz Jamerson and TLT member Doris Seal were contacted by the Cumberland Ruritans to do a presentation on the Cumberland First web site. Van stated that the Red Bud Garden Club had invited him to do a web site presentation in January, 2004.

February 11, 2004 – Cumberland County Extension Office, Cumberland C.H. – 7:00 pm

Present: 8 TLT members, Retired VCE Agent Van Petty, TOP Project liaison Pam Gibson, TOP Project Coordinator Jaime Shetrone, Blacksburg Electronic Village staff member Carol Cornish

TOP Project Coordinator Jaime Shetrone informed the TLT members that her position with the TOP project will end March 31, 2004. She introduced Carol Cornish as the

county contact from BEV. Jaime also discussed the training for TLT members that will be responsible for the maintenance of the web site. Linda Eanes and Jill Matthews volunteered to serve and attend the training. TLT members thanked Jaime for her assistance and wished her well in her future endeavors. TLT members also welcomed Carol Cornish and stated they looked forward to working with her on the project.

Pam Gibson, TOP project liaison to agents and communities and a Program Manager for the School of Public and International Affairs at Virginia Tech, conducted an evaluation of the TOP project in Cumberland County. TLT members answered questions relating to their involvement and experiences with the Cumberland Technology Leadership Team. Many members expressed the positive impacts of the web site.

Van Petty gave an update of the changes to the web site. He also stated that he will contact County Administrator Judy Hollifield and get a list of the county appointed boards and commissions to post on the web site, which was a recommendation from the county's *Take Charge* sessions.

Van stated that TLT members Doris Seal and Liz Jamerson made several presentations promoting the web site. The groups include students at Cumberland High School and the Cumberland Ruritan's Club. Due to snow in January, Van had to reschedule his presentation at the Red Bud Gardening Club.

Van also expressed concerns that the county citizens were not using the web site to the degree he expected. After much discussion, the following suggestions were made:

- Require students to post an assignment on the web site
- Put a scavenger hunt on the web site
- Post county-wide events and activities on the web site
- Conduct a contest that involves using the web site
- Put pictures of students who won awards, athletics, etc.
- Put school events on the web site
- List programs and activities for youth and seniors

The Cumberland TLT, in cooperation with Cumberland High School and Southside Community College, is sponsoring a five week web page design class beginning March 8, 2004. Thirteen registrants are needed in order to have the class. The cost is \$64.75. The class will be held in the Cumberland High School Vocational Building from 6:30 – 9:30 pm.

May 3, 2004 – Cumberland County Extension Office, Cumberland C.H. – 7:00 pm

Present: 8 TLT members, Retired VCE Agent Van Petty, TOP Project Coordinator Jaime Shetrone, Blacksburg Electronic Village Director Bill Sanders, Linda Staylor, Cumberland Public Schools

Mrs. Linda Staylor, of the Office of Special Services of Cumberland Public Schools gave an overview of the “Learn to Serve” grant. She stated that the grant addressed several areas such as providing business and industry links to the Cumberland First web site, promotion materials for county economic development, students teaching adults web page development, and the opportunity for high school students to learn web page design. Mrs. Staylor expressed a desire to work with the Cumberland TLT to accomplish these tasks. The grant period is March 2004 through September 2007.

Jaime Shetrone and Bill Sanders addressed the third year TOP program efforts. Jaime stated that she would be working with Dr. Eleanor Schlenker to complete the TOP final report, due in September 2004. She mentioned that an email survey would be sent to TLT members for completion in the near future. Jaime said the final report would be given to the Cumberland Board of Supervisors. Bill Sanders talked about what’s next for the TOP initiative. The following are ideas he shared concerning future TOP program efforts:

- The national TOP initiative involves legislation to solve “infrastructure territory” of technology companies and services
- Governor Warner is proposing a program to outsource technology business to rural Virginia
- Virginia Cooperative Extension’s role with technology and involving people
- John Nichol’s county technology report and how to use the good technology ideas that come from the county
- Grant sources for county TLT funding
- Job creation via the Internet
- What are Cumberland’s future technology needs? – social, business, resources needed
- Technology pilot program for Cumberland High School which will involve Virginia Tech, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and Cumberland Public Schools

The following are suggestions for getting citizens to use the Cumberland First web site, and who has volunteered to follow up with these suggestions:

- Put the Cumberland First.net web address on web sites of other organizations and business web pages
- Put the Cumberland First.net web address in the local newspaper’s weekly issues (TLT member Yvonne Earvin)
- List county events and activities on the front page of the web site (web site administrators)
- Put a feature news story on the front page of the web site (such as news at eleven)
- Charge a fee for weekly business ads
- Contact local restaurants to put the Cumberland First.net web address on their placemats (Board of Supervisors member Cliff White)
- Sponsor a contest via the web site

- Cooking corner feature on web site that gives recipes and food preparation tips
- Post events and activities on the community calendar
- Conduct a web page auction/silent auction where people visit items at the schools, etc and place their bids via the internet
- Local job listing
- Put links to movie theaters and video stores
- Put web address on county mailings such as tax bills, sewer bills, etc. (Van Petty)
- Put the web address on telephone bills, etc.
- Put Cumberland Public School events and activities on the web page (Van Petty)
- Recruit new TLT members at the closing ceremony of the Cumberland Youth League, June 19, 2004 (Yvonne Earvin)
- Create bookmarks with web page logo and put in libraries (TLT member Linda Eanes)
- Put a “lifter” in local business billing envelopes (Cliff White)
- Put a student of the month on the front page of the web site – see Mrs. Rather-Terry (Van Petty)

A suggestion was made to add a search engine to the front page of the web site. Jaime said she would investigate the possibility. TLT member Doris Seal recommended that a web page template for business and civic organizations be added to the web page. Jaime and Bill Sanders agreed to check out the possibility. Jaime stated that the help tab on the Cumberland First web site has instructions for helping design web sites. She encouraged each of us to check it out. Linda Staylor stated that a map of Cumberland with voting districts would be helpful to citizens.

Van Petty stated that 11 people took the class offered by Southside Community College, and each person designed a web page. Ms. Kelly Cummings, business teacher with the Buckingham Public Schools, taught the class. Several students linked their pages from the Cumberland First web site. The remaining students will be posting their web page with Linda Eanes’s help.

May 24, 2004 – Cumberland County Extension Office, Cumberland C.H. – 6:00 pm

Present: 6 TLT members, Retired VCE Agent Van Petty

Van Petty stated that BEV and Virginia Tech are in the process of completing the final report of the TOP program. The Cumberland TLT has been asked to submit copies of all news articles, brochures, flyers, etc. that have been developed to Dr. Eleanor Schlenker. Jaime Shetrone stated that the want to complete the report by the end of June, 2004.

The following actions resulted from the May 3, 2004 TLT meeting. TLT member Yvonne Earvin contacted the *Cumberland Bulletin* and *Farmville Herald* newspapers to

get them to promote the Cumberland First web site by putting the web address in the paper. The *Cumberland Bulletin* has started, and will run the address for the next few months. Yvonne is also working on a web page contest by having county citizens sign up for a drawing at the Cumberland Youth League baseball recognition ceremony on June 18, 2004. Yvonne said she would contact a local restaurant for a free dinner as a prize.

TLT member Linda Eanes gave an example of a brochure and bookmark she is working on to promote the Cumberland First web site. She said she is also working on a “lifter” to use as an insert for mass mailings.

TLT members also discussed designating several days this summer to have sign-up at the public library to promote the Cumberland First web site. They tentatively agreed to conduct a presentation about the site to the Cumberland County Board of Supervisors in July.

TLT member Doris Seal encouraged TLT members to start using the discussion board. She said that her students at the high school were using it, but county citizens were not. Doris also stated that the students were somewhat concerned that the county citizens were not responding to their topic on the discussion board. All TLT members present were encouraged to use the discussion boards.

TLT members also discussed the use of the front page of the web site. They agreed to start posting county and school news items on the front page, similar to the BEV web page. Several ideas formulated were:

- A gardening questions/information section featuring lawn care, seasonal gardening tips, recipes, etc.
- Holiday recipes/safety tips
- Community news
- School news
- Government news: public hearings, meetings, etc.

Training efforts

February 24, 2003

The TLT received an Introduction to Community Networks training session from VCE Area Specialist Jon Johnson on February 24, 2003. This training covered components and roles of community networks, as well as keys to their success.

August 27, 2003

The TLT received training on the calendar and discussion forum sections of their web site. This training was delivered by Blacksburg Electronic Village staff member Robert Roberts and covered not only how to use the calendar and discussion forum, but also how to administer and moderate them.

September 30, 2003

Training on how to use the BEV in a Box directory services was given to the TLT by TOP Project Director Mathew Mathai on September 30, 2003. This training covered how to add people to the directory, approve new entries, add new business and community organization listings, and edit or delete all listings.

March 8, 2004

TLT members Linda Eanes and Jill Matthews volunteered to be web site administrators, and went through "transition training" on March 8, 2004. During this training, they were shown how to maintain the Cumberland web site, including how to make content changes.

Take Charge

Take Charge is an educational program designed to enable leaders, decision-makers and residents of rural communities face the future. The program used in Virginia is adapted from the "Take Charge: Economic Development in Small Communities" program published by North Central Regional Center for Rural Development. The process helps participants objectively analyze their community, consider alternatives, develop and maintain consensus, strategize, and take action for community development. It helps rural residents take charge of their community's destiny.

The *Take Charge* educational program is designed to enable leaders, decision-makers and residents of rural communities face the future. It helps them to objectively analyze their community, consider alternatives, develop and maintain consensus, strategize, and take action for community development. It helps rural residents take charge of their community's destiny.

Objectives of the Take Charge Program

The objectives of the *Take Charge* Program are to:

- Assemble a broad cross-section of people with various positions and interests from the community and enhance communication among these people.
- Help communities explore short- and long-term development strategies and gain a consensus vision of their own future.
- Gain broad community involvement and support through the empowerment of local citizens.
- Assist communities in analyzing their strengths and vulnerabilities and choosing the most appropriate development opportunities.
- Develop strategies to realize community residents' vision for the future.
- Utilize and build upon existing financial, physical, social, human, civic and natural resources (assets) to help realize the vision.
- Implement an action plan whereby the community the community can begin to take charge of their future.

The Take Charge Workshops

The *Take Charge* program begins with three, three-hour workshops. These workshops are designed to foster collaboration among the citizens of each community, to move the group toward consensus, and to provide a framework for creating a vision for the county.

Workshop #1 - Where are we now?

The goals of the first workshop are to examine historical and current trends and characteristics of the community and consider implications of the future, as well as to conduct a self-examination of the community's strengths and vulnerabilities in terms of financial, social, human, and natural assets.

Workshop #2 - Where do we want to be?

In the second workshop, participants develop a collective vision for the future of the community and assess the opportunities for and threats to achieving that vision.

Workshop #3 - How do we get there?

In the third workshop, participants identify and frame overarching development issues, identify existing resources to help address the issues, and explore alternative ways to organize the community for action.

Benefits of the Take Charge Program

The benefits of the *Take Charge* program are:

- Increased level of participation and ownership in the community decision-making process
- Increased general level of understanding of the community and its strategic position in the global economy
- Expanded pool of leadership and entrepreneurial talent
- More support for crucial decisions on strategic community issues
- Enhanced utilization of local resources

Cumberland County's Take Charge Sessions

Cumberland County's three *Take Charge* sessions were held on March 20, March 27, and April 3, 2003.

In Session I of Take Charge, "Where are we now?", the Cumberland County participants identified what they felt were Cumberland County's greatest strengths and weaknesses. Later, in Session II of Take Charge, "Where do we want to be?", these strengths were listed and weaknesses were prioritized. The results were as follows:

Strengths

- Public parks
- Youth activities
- Strong technology training in school
- Diversity of churches
- Good work ethic

Weakness	# of votes received
Low numbers of manufacturing industries to generate revenue	20
Few employment opportunities	13
Lack of job skills	9
Inadequate space for student enrollment	8
Lack of leadership	6
Low college enrollments	6
High school & middle school complex	6
Secondary roads	6
Sludge being spread in the county	6
No school agricultural or vocational training	6
Low high school graduation rates	4
People resisting change	4
No public water supply	4
High poverty	3

In Session III of Take Charge, “Where do we want to be?”, the participants identified where they would like to see the county be in the year 2020. These goals included:

- Having a regional industrial park
- Airport expansion
- A by-pass around the courthouse with pedestrian access to the courthouse complex
- Historic colonial style facades on businesses in the Cumberland Courthouse area
- Broadband access and improved technological infrastructure throughout the county
- Land use planning for housing development, recreational areas and facilities, and services and promotion of controlled development

- Public water and sewer throughout the county
- Fire and rescue services at John Randolph Community Center
- Promotion of festivals, antique shows, outdoor concerts, etc.
- Health care facilities, such as hospitals and nursing and retirement homes
- A reservoir in the northern portion of the county
- New high/middle schools
- Public golf courses
- Development of the horse industry
- Zoning for large lots and homes
- A visitor's center
- Water parks

In addition to these goals, the participants in this session identified ways to help Cumberland County reach these goals. These ways include:

- Greater use of local newspapers, churches, bulletins in local stores, radio, and development of a community web site to increase awareness of public appointments and requests for civic participation
- Utilizing the TOP initiative to develop a community technology plan that can be shared with local leaders and planners (this technology plan can be found in Volume II of this document)
- Utilizing technology and technology planning as a component for economic growth and retention of existing business
- Recognize that successful economic and social growth is a step by step building process
- Use the community web site as a mechanism to improve communication among citizens and local leaders
- Refine the business survey of local businesses using computers and the Internet to include information about residential usage
- Distribute a survey about home computer and Internet usage through the student population of the county school system
- Prepare for grant funding opportunities that pay for infrastructure improvements

Cumberland County has begun utilizing their *Take Charge* results by dedicating a section of their county web site to some of the issues raised in the sessions. The "County Concerns" section of the Cumberland First web site highlights these items:

- A study to assess the feasibility of developing a raw water supply reservoir
- Grants that have been awarded to the county to focus on improvements along the Route 60 corridor in the Cumberland Courthouse area
- The inclusion of Cumberland County in the Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail
- The upcoming construction of a public water system in the Cumberland Courthouse area

Community network development

Information about Cumberland's community network development process can be found in the meeting minutes, beginning on May 15, 2003.

Community workshops and presentations

October 15, 2003

The Cumberland County web site was publicly "unveiled" on October 2, 2003, and response has been very positive. A public meeting was held on October 15, 2003 to further publicize the site. This event was advertised in the newspaper with special efforts to attract government officials, educators, and representatives of civic organizations and clubs.

October 21-December 2, 2003

The Cumberland County TLT conducted a four-session computer and web page workshop at the Cumberland High school to assist small business owners and community organizations. The sessions were held on October 21, November 11, November 18, and December 2, 2003, and were guided by TLT member Bruce Robinson, with assistance from TLT member Liz Jamerson and TOP Project Coordinator Jaime Shetrone. Fifteen people attended the workshop, and twelve businesses and community group web pages were developed as part of the online incubator services.

Fourth quarter, 2003

TLT members promoted the Cumberland First web site by giving presentations to community groups. Three of these presentations were held in the fourth quarter of 2003—the Cumberland Ruritans, the Red Bud Garden Club, and one county-wide meeting. A total of 75 people have attended these meetings. Handouts used for these meetings can be found in Appendix B of this document.

March 8-April 5, 2004

A one-credit web design class was offered by the Cumberland County TLT in conjunction with Southside Virginia Community College. The cost for the class was \$64.75, and it was held at Cumberland High School on March 8, March 15, March 22, March 29, and April 5, 2004. The class was taught by Ms. Kelly Cummings, business teacher with the Buckingham Public Schools. 11 people took advantage of the class, and each person designed a web page. Several students linked their pages from the Cumberland First web site. The remaining students will be posting their web page with TLT member and web administrator Linda Eanes's help.

April 17, 2004

At the Patriot's Day festival on April 17, 2004, the Cumberland TLT sponsored a booth. At this event, both children and adults are encouraged to dress in colonial garb, and for those who do not have access to costumes, they have the opportunity to be photographed standing behind a costume cutout that displays their faces. The TLT used a digital camera to photograph all interested children and adults, and then gave them the disk with their photos and instructed them on how they can get them printed. On the disk was a sticker advertising the Cumberland First.net web site. This activity not only promoted the web site, but also helped build awareness of the benefits of technology.

Additionally, an 800 phone number has been established at the Cumberland County Extension Office, devoted to the demonstration of online opportunities.

June 18, 2004

A booth advertising the Cumberland First web site will be set up and county citizens will be asked to sign up for a drawing at the Cumberland Youth League baseball recognition ceremony on June 18, 2004. A local restaurant is being asked for a free dinner as a prize.

Publicity efforts

The following articles were published about the TOP project efforts in Cumberland County. Copies of these articles are located in Appendix B of this report.

Norton, Jason; "Connection Selection: County Picked for Network Plan"; *The Farmville Herald*; December 5, 2001.

"Workshops to 'Take Charge' of Cumberland's Future"; *The Farmville Herald*; March 7, 2003.

Smith, Bill; "Cumberland to Become an Electronic Village"; *The Cumberland Bulletin*; March 13, 2003.

"Cumberland Seeks Name for Website"; *The Farmville Herald*; March 21, 2003.

Petty, Van; "Getting Rural Virginia Connected to the World"; *The Cumberland Bulletin*; June 26, 2003.

"Cumberland's Electronic Village Named!"; *The Cumberland Bulletin*; August 7, 2003.

Smith, Bill; "Technology Group Launches Cumberland Web Site"; *The Cumberland Bulletin*; October 23, 2003.

Norton, Jason; "Getting Connected: Cumberland Web Page Hopes to Link Citizens"; *The Farmville Herald*; October 31, 2003.

At the Patriot's Day festival on April 17, 2004, the Cumberland TLT sponsored a booth. At this event, both children and adults are encouraged to dress in colonial garb, and for those who do not have access to costumes, they have the opportunity to be photographed standing behind a costume cutout that displays their faces. The TLT used a digital camera to photograph all interested children and adults, and then gave them the disk with their photos and instructed them on how they can get them printed. On the disk was a sticker advertising the Cumberland First.net web site. This activity not only promoted the web site, but also helped build awareness of the benefits of technology.

TLT member Linda Eanes developed a brochure and bookmarks promoting the Cumberland First web site. Examples of these can be found in Appendix B of this document.

Successes

The number one key to Cumberland County's success in this project was Van Petty. Van, a retired Extension Agent for Cumberland County, took on this project on a volunteer basis. He kept the project moving in Cumberland, helped to generate ideas, and encouraged people to volunteer for activities. He worked to bring training to the county separate from what the Blacksburg Electronic Village and Virginia Tech could provide. During the course of this project, he was elected to the county Board of Supervisors, and continued to act both as a county Supervisor and the lead on the project.

In addition to Van Petty, the county also had a superior Technology Leadership Team. The team included several people who are involved in education in one way or another, and this seemed to add a flavor to the team that was lacking in other counties. Additionally, some of the TLT members had enough technology skills to train county participants without much help from the Blacksburg Electronic Village and Virginia Tech. They also have been ready and willing to volunteer for assignments associated with the project. TLT meetings in Cumberland County are often very active and full of discussion, suggestions, and ideas for improvement.

Van and the team are also very focused on what they can do with this project in the future. They continue to brainstorm ways to expose the community to the web site and bring training to the people. They are also already planning ways to get additional grants and funding, and will be working with a grant that was received by the county public school system.

Another way Cumberland County has succeeded in this project is their adoption of the Community Connections and Virtual Business Incubator programs. Cumberland was one of the first counties to launch these programs, and the first to hold web development workshops. They have had 2 series of workshops to date, and have registered 12 accounts under the Community Connections program, and 14 accounts under the Virtual Business Incubator program—by far the most accounts signed up for in any county. TLT member Linda Eanes volunteered to serve as the registrar and also assists people with getting their web sites online, something which has been greatly appreciated. One reason why project management feels that Cumberland County has excelled in this portion of the project is that Cumberland not only focused on the Business Incubator portion of this project, but also on what it can do for community organizations, a sector that has been somewhat forgotten in some other counties.

Statistics

The Cumberland First web site has had a total of 4,681 visits (as of June 1, 2004), with an average of 512 visits a month since September, 2003.

The best estimate of unique visitors to the Cumberland First web site is 2,466 since September, 2003.

The Village Mall and Calendar sections are the most visited sections of the web site.

The Cumberland First web site has been linked to from the Cumberland Public Schools web site, the Farmville Herald web site, and the Farmville Area Chamber of Commerce web site.

Registered members of the Cumberland First web site, by month (as of June 1, 2004):

Month	# of new registered members
September '03	1
October '03	104
November '03	3
December '03	1
January '04	0
February '04	16
March '04	15
April '04	6
May '04	5
June '04	2
Total	153

There have been 17 events for the calendar submitted through the web site.

Twelve accounts have been registered under the Community Connections program.

Fourteen accounts have been registered under the Virtual Business Incubator program.

Obstacles

Cumberland County did not have many of the obstacles that appeared in other counties. Because there was already no Extension Agent in Cumberland County when the project began, retired Extension Agent Van Petty volunteered to lead almost from the very beginning. There also were no competing projects in Cumberland, and the TLT that was formed turned out to be very enthusiastic and willing to volunteer for tasks.

In the absence of other obstacles, the TLT themselves have suggested a couple of items that they feel could have gone better.

First, the TLT feels that they could have a more diverse team. They are looking for ways to attract new participants for the project, especially youth. They have expressed a desire to get more “every day” people to volunteer for the project.

Additionally, the TLT feels that not enough county citizens are utilizing the web site. They would like to see more use of the discussion boards and the calendar. In response to this problem, the TLT is actively brainstorming ways to promote the web site, and have several plans already in progress.

Lessons Learned

This grant was written as a research grant, and as such, wasn't expected to have a 100% success rate. The TOP Project Management Group has looked back over the project and has come up with this collection of "Lessons Learned"—things that could have been done better. These lessons are not meant only to be lessons for the Project Management Group, but also lessons for the counties, to be used to evaluate their approach to the grant and how they may approach future opportunities.

Competing projects

This project provided the most benefits in counties where the concept was brand new. Those counties that had projects that may be seen as competing, whether those projects were done by the county or privately, had a more difficult time. Constant questions about duplication of efforts hampered progress and prevented participants from seeing alternative benefits. If a project such as this is taken on again, a thorough check for similar projects in the county must be done.

Counties vs. communities

Early in the project, the Project Management Group decided to treat each county as a whole community, rather than focusing solely on the participating communities outlined in the grant. However, special attention was still paid to these communities, with efforts being made to ensure the recruitment of residents from those areas.

One of the driving reasons behind this decision was the situation in King & Queen County. Because King & Queen County has no incorporated towns, only "settlement areas", the participating communities listed in the grant were the voting districts of King & Queen Courthouse and Newtown. During discussions of the grant with local government leaders, concerns were expressed that, considering the politics of the county, it would be a mistake to promote the idea that one area of the county was being targeted, and not another.

Another contribution to this decision was the difficulty agents in all counties were having recruiting volunteers from only the selected participating communities. It's difficult to recruit a large number of volunteers from areas with very small populations. A table containing the grant-listed participating communities and their populations appears below, to illustrate this point. It was determined that there would be more successful recruitment and participation if the entire county was included in the process.

Populations, based on Census estimates

County	Community	Population
Accomack County		38,305
	Onancock	1,525

County	Community	Population
	Locust Mount/Wachapreague)	236
	Horntown	No data
Craig County		5,091
	New Castle	179
	Sinking Creek Valley	No data
	John's Creek Valley	No data
	Paint Bank	No data
Cumberland County		9,017
	Cartersville	No data
	Cumberland Courthouse	No data
Dickenson County		16,395
	Clintwood	1,549
	Haysi	186
Louisa County		25,627
	Mineral	424
	Bumpass	No data
King & Queen County		6,630
	King & Queen Courthouse	No data
	Newtown	No data
Northampton County		13,093
	Cheapside	No data
	Cape Charles	1,134
	Bayview	No data
	Nassawadox	572
	New Road	No data

Enthusiastic leadership

It was found that the counties that benefited the most from this project were those counties that had an enthusiastic leader. This was not always an Extension Agent, because two of the counties had volunteer leaders. An enthusiastic leader can do a lot to keep the project moving and to keep people interested. It was also important for the leader to understand what was going on in the project, even if they didn't necessarily understand all the technical details.

Meeting times

Those counties that had meetings in the evenings seemed to attract more people than those that met during the work day. People can often find it difficult to attend a voluntary meeting during the work day, especially when they have a long commute, as many of the people in these rural communities do. Scheduling meetings in the evening, perhaps with a dinner option, seems to be the best way to encourage people to attend.

Take Charge participation

Those counties that participated in the *Take Charge* process seemed to have a better handle on the project than the counties that did not. *Take Charge* not only provided a way to identify issues in the county, but it was also an alternative way to attract people to the TOP project in general.

Additionally, there could have been a follow-up of the *Take Charge* process every six months to keep people connected. It may have better addressed how issue identification and technology are linked.

Technical ability

When this grant was first developed, it was developed with the idea that volunteers would not have to be technically proficient to participate. We still hold this belief to be true. Several counties have benefited from this project without having high technically skilled people on their teams. The key to success has appeared to be a willingness to learn and move outside of their established comfort zone. Several people involved with this project have stated that their skills have increased as a result.

It was also important to have a variety of skills on the team. Sometimes those who are very technically adept are not very adept at things like marketing and presenting. There was room in this project for people of varying skills and abilities.

Technology Leadership Team composition

The composition of a county's Technology Leadership Team was an important component of its success or struggle. Teams that had a good mix of people from different backgrounds and skill sets seemed to do the best. Also, it was important to include more than those people who would normally be considered "county leaders" or "county activists". People who are already very active in county-based activities may not feel that they have the time and/or energy to devote to yet another monthly meeting. One key to attracting these types of people was advertising through the newspaper and public announcements, not only recruiting people by invite. There was also a lack of youth involvement on many of the teams.

Time commitments

The time commitment from team leaders to this project turned out to be more than was expected when the project was conceived. If this project were to be done again, it may

help to have a paid, part-time person in each county to assist with project related tasks. This would ease the burden on the team leader and allow for a back-up when the team leader is unable to devote the time needed, whether those reasons are related to work or personal issues.

Training facilities

One obstacle that arose in several counties was the lack of a good facility for hands-on computer training, whether the training was for TLT members or the general public. Those counties that did not have proper facilities unfortunately received inferior training. The identification of a facility and its availability is something that should happen as early in the project as possible. Perhaps, it should even be considered a requirement for participation in the project.

Web site policies and procedures

The TOP Project Management Group found that there were similar questions that were asked by almost every county regarding security and use of the web site. Examples of the questions are:

- What security measures are/will be in place to protect the county sites?
- How is content regulated during the grant? For instance, can a local witchcraft shop be prevented from listing its address on the village mall?
- How can links to porn sites or other non-community supported sites be prevented?
- What kinds of policies should be continued after the grant is over and the county site continues to operate?

These questions showed us two things. First, security and operating procedures should be planned before the project start, so these questions can be answered in a timely manner. Second, we found that it was important to have a resource on web site policies for these counties to use, because the volunteers in this project generally did not feel qualified or capable of creating policy.

Thoughts from the TLT

The following questions were asked by Pam Gibson, TOP project liaison to agents and communities and a Program Manager for the School of Public and International Affairs at Virginia Tech, at a Technology Leadership Team (TLT) meeting on February 11, 2004.

What are your general impressions of the project?

TLT members expressed that they were able to learn about the county. One said they appreciated the effort to include as many people as possible. Government, business, schools, etc. all had the opportunity to be involved. The community web site was well received by the board of supervisors, as well as the county administration and school system. The county administration and community supported the project by sponsoring meals and materials. Civic organizations and churches have been involved. Overall, the TLT felt there had been no negative feedback.

What are your feelings on the issue identification process you used?

Cumberland County used the *Take Charge* process for their issue identification. The TLT felt that *Take Charge* provided an opportunity to probe lots of issues and opened up communication. Participants became informed about the county, many for the first time. The process included people from all over the county and gave everyone an opportunity to meet and communicate. The process helped the community define areas for the web site. In addition, the process defined issues such as economic development concerns that have continued to be pursued by the county and participants.

How do you feel about the technology related to this project?

The introduction to technology has created an environment where people want to learn. The workshops have helped community members learn and there has been a realization that you can handle the computer technology even if you have never used it before. Even members who have very little association with technology have been able to work on the directory and calendar. They are learning how to use HTML and have attended classes to learn how to do web pages.

Additionally, everyone wants high speed internet service, but there is difficulty in trying to find providers.

To what extent did the issues identification process influence the development of the technology piece?

The *Take Charge* program provided a forum to develop the topics to be included in the web page. In addition, the program provided a discussion forum on how technology could be used to address some issues.

What were some of the things that went well?

The facilitation of participants in the Take Charge program as they worked through the process worked well. Also, there has been great support from the community. There have been volunteers for the technology positions and good support from businesses signing up for web pages. In fact, workshop sign-ups had to be limited because of logistics.

What were some things that didn't go well?

The educational process is slower than expected. The team would like to see more people using the web site by now, though linking to the newspapers has improved participation.

If you had to pick one major success as a result of this project, what would that be?

The web site is up and running, and a lot of people know about it.

What would you do differently?

The TLT felt that there should have been more “everyday” folks involved in the TLT, especially in the beginning. Churches and organization members, not just officers, should have been involved. All of the Cumberland County high school students have laptops, and could have been helpful, and business teachers may have been a good resource.

Overall, there needs to be more personal contacts made, and more hand-holding involved.

What additional or unanticipated things, positive or negative, happened as a results of this project?

More grants based on technology and access to technology are being applied for. There has been great participation from TLT members, with volunteers for administration and training.

This process busted paradigms. For the first time, citizens, local government, educators, and other sectors of the community came together. They were willing to travel and meet in the middle of the county. This county typically doesn't want change, and they never expected it would work.

The process has provided a turning point in Cumberland County.

What collaboration has resulted from this project?

The school is working with local government. The business community has been supportive and has attended workshops. Churches and civic organizations have

supported the effort and participated. The process has helped discover talents in the community they didn't know about before.

In the words of one TLT member, "The process has opened doors into the community."

Additional comments

Additional comments were provided by Cumberland County TLT members by answering the following questions via email. The email was delivered to all TLT members with the TLT mailing list, to give those who did not attend the meeting on February 11, 2004 a chance to give their feedback.

From your perspective, what were the program's greatest strengths, contributions, and successes?

"The program drew together people for all parts of the county and from many different interest groups. It provided training in web design and exposure to the possibilities of technology. It also will lay the basis for future economic growth."

"I thought we had wonderful support from Va Tech and the Extension Office.

Also, I think the selection of team members in our county was good. We had a diverse group and they spread throughout the county, most also had experience working with group's like this before."

"The following contributed to Cumberland's success: Citizen participation; Local government support; Cumberland public schools cooperation; and involved TLT members. The local Extension Agent is the key to making the process work."

In your opinion, what were the program's weak points and how might they be improved?

"The process seemed to be rather long and drawn out. We had some meeting where the prime objective sometimes got lost—and we lost a few people during this process. Some of the meeting were overkill—the information may have been important to somebody, but not to the people who were present. We should streamline."

"Sometimes, we found out the easy way to do something after..., but that is not so bad.

I would have liked to have more contact with the other teams. I did read the info on the internet, but I like to see people.

There should be some recognition of the team members, college credit, stipend, meals, coupons something.

The easy answer is that the locality should do it, but the grant writers should have some incentives for people who participate and contribute. The locality only recognizes the efforts now."

“There was no process for getting businesses and community groups to design web pages. Each county had to develop its own. A web design template with basic information about a business or community group and an IT person to input the information would have been great.

The constant changing of TOP personnel affected the continuity. I know this was a new program with a lot of unknowns. However, in the future a full explanation of the project requirements as it relates to time, local program cost, and citizen involvement would help the Unit Extension Staff.”

What do you think are the most important things that need to be done to sustain and build upon the program going forward?

“We need to publicize. If we do this, I think many of the program will continue to grow. We must have participation and interest to make it successful. We also have to have someone with enough time and expertise to keep adding and improving the site—no one likes an old, never-changing site. Even if the information is current, if the page never has any new features or points of interest, it will die.”

“Our county is building on the program, the laptop initiative at the school has potential, the school grants that can coordinate.

Continued training for web development and uses by each group.

The use of the discussion board and calendar by community members.”

“Each county must have Virginia Cooperative Extension, Blacksburg Electronic Village and county support to go forward. The project must become self sufficient. It must have a revenue producing component, such as having businesses and community groups pay for web design and technical support. Each participating county must have a computer person with the skills to develop and maintain web pages.”

What are the major points you would like us to make in our report about what has happened in your county as a result of being part of the TOP grant?

“I think it should be made clear that small, rural counties that want to increase their Web presence and ensure economic success will need grants like this to help. Cumberland could never have paid for all the expertise, server space, etc. without this grant. I think that we have cooperatively created a Web page that county residents can be proud of.”

“The TOP grant has been a major incentive for our community to join the virtual business economy and the timing coincided with other initiatives in our school division.

There is a tremendous potential for our community to grow in the internet business/social/personal world because of this grant.

Without this initiative, the ground work would not have been established.

Thanks for everything, I have enjoyed being on this committee and meeting all of the wonderful and dedicated people who have worked on this grant. It has helped me both personally and professionally and I can only anticipate great things happening because of this grant!”

“The Cumberland TLT was successful in getting county businesses and community groups to design and post web pages to the internet. We were also successful in getting county citizens to become members of the community web page. Many positive comments have come from people who use the web page. It is becoming a way for citizens to communicate and keep up with county issues. Business interest has been awakened, also. Many business owners want to be connected to the internet to market their products. We must find a way to make this possible, because many lack the computer skills to make this happen.”

Plans for the future

Cumberland County's Technology Leadership Team continues to work to advertise the Cumberland First web site and encourage county members to use it. Some ideas that are in progress are:

- Putting the Cumberland First web address in the local newspapers' weekly issues
- Listing county events and activities on the front page of the web site
- Adding a cooking corner feature to the web site that gives recipes and food preparation tips
- Posting events and activities on the community calendar
- Putting Cumberland Public School events and activities on the web
- Recruiting new TLT members and advertising the web site at the closing ceremony of the Cumberland Youth League, June 18,
- Creating bookmarks with web page logo to put in
- Putting a "lifter" in local business billing envelopes

Additionally, the Cumberland TLT has plans to work with Mrs. Linda Staylor of the Office of Special Services of Cumberland Public Schools on a grant recently rewarded to the school system. The grant, entitled "Learn to Serve Virginia: K-12 School-Based Service-Learning Program", is designed to address several areas, such as county economic development and computer skill levels.

Some activities of the grant will be providing business and industry links to the Cumberland First web site, the development of promotional materials for county economic development, students teaching adults web page development, and the opportunity for high school students to learn web page design. The grant period is March 2004 through September 2007.

Appendix A – Recruitment material

Contents:

- List of members of Cumberland County Technology Leadership Team
- Letter of commitment from Cumberland County

Members of the Cumberland County Technology Leadership Team (as of October 16, 2002):

Member	Town	Occupation/Affiliation
Aaron B. Hickman	Cumberland	IT Manager, Cumberland County
Agustus Harper		
Anita H. French	Cumberland	Commissioner of the Revenue, Cumberland County
Anne D. Overby		
Barbara Davenport	Cumberland	Retired
Bill Osl	Cartersville	Retired Administrator, C&P Telephone Company
Bruce Robinson	Cartersville	Associate Professor, Piedmont Virginia Community College
Carol Blanchetti		Clerk of Circuit Court, Cumberland County
Dave Hooper	Farmville	Web Specialist, Longwood University
Donald Bishop	Cumberland	Farmer; President, Farm Bureau
Doris Brown	Cumberland	Retired Program Support Technician, Cumberland County Extension Office
Doris Seal	Cumberland	Teacher, Cumberland County Public Schools
Elaine Whitley		
Elbert R. Womack		
Elizabeth Jamerson	Farmville	Teacher, Cumberland County Public Schools
Gail C. Thompson		
Gail Swenson		
Henry Bradbury, Jr.		
Jeff Stimpson		Insurance
Jeremiah Heaton		
Jill Matthews	Farmville	Director of Accounting, Cumberland County
Jo Smith	Farmville	Retired, Cumberland County Historical Society
JoAnn Vaughan		
Juanita M. Urban		
Judy Hollifield	Cumberland	County Administrator, Cumberland County

Member	Town	Occupation/Affiliation
Kevin Ingle		Businessman, Napa Auto Parts
Laura Richmond		Secretary, Bear Creek State Park
Lee Pfeiffer	Cumberland	Treasurer, Cumberland County
Linda Eanes		4-H Program Associate, Cumberland County Extension Office
Lois E. Lee		
Major Thompson		
Martha Reid		
Marty Shute		Rabbit farmer
Mary Lee Dimmie		
Meade Jones		Owner, Cumberland Bulletin Newspaper
Nathan Branch		
Pat Bickel	Cartersville	Retired
Phil Scarborough	Cumberland	Teacher; Member, Cumberland County Board of Supervisors
Ralph Mulleins	Cumberland	Information Technologist, Cumberland County Public Schools
Roland Gilliam		
Sheldon Butler		Deputy Treasurer, Cumberland County
Sherry Swinson		Assistant County Administrator, Cumberland County
Ted E. Overby		
Van Petty	Cumberland	Retired Extension Agent, Cumberland County
William Bagley		
Yvonne Earvin		

Appendix B – Publicity

Appendix C – Benchmark/Assessment research

Appendix D – Executive summaries from all counties