



## The Top Seven Intelligent Communities of 2001

Selected by the Intelligent Community Forum  
A PROJECT OF WORLD TELEPORT ASSOCIATION

### Bario, Malaysia

An atypical community for an award usually associated with high-tech corridors such as Malaysia's own Multi-Media Supercorridor, Bario is located in the remotest highlands of Borneo, Malaysia. Although Bario residents, known as the Kelabits, are without phones or public electricity, its elders learned from researchers at the Malaysian University of Sarawak the benefits of being connected to the world via the Internet. The researchers received a grant from both the Malaysian and Canadian governments to determine how the people of Bario would use technology for sustainable social development. Through satellite connectivity provided by Telekom Malaysia Bhd, computer courses have begun in the school and a telecenter -- a modest wooden house with PCs, scanners and a terminal -- has been established to allow the residents to perform a range of online functions related to economic development and social initiatives. The most significant economic development to date is an initiative to network with local agriculture authorities to boost outside sales of Bario's special form of rice, which is renowned throughout the country for its sweet fragrance.

### Ennis, Ireland

Ennis is an Irish town whose origins date back to the 12th century. Through a private-sector funded experiment, this small town — where some of the 5,500 households did not even have a telephone — became the most wired community in Ireland. It all started in 1997 when Eircom (then known as Telecom Eireann) sponsored a competition across Ireland to create an intelligent community. Ennis, as the winner, received a £15 million (\$21 million) grant to invest in telecommunications infrastructure, education and training, and the integration of information technology into local businesses. As of 2000, Ennis had invested £9 million in building a broadband fiber ring and digital exchange; offering a free telephone connection and PC to every resident; and installing IT equipment and providing training in the schools and small-to-midsize businesses. A further £1 million was raised in the local community, providing £7 million to see the project through 2002. The city is already earning revenue by offering itself as a test bed for interactive services.

### LaGrange, Georgia, USA

A rural city of 26,000 people 60 miles southwest of Atlanta, LaGrange has pioneered in developing public-private ventures for broadband-based economic development. Through relationships with companies including BellSouth, ITC Holding, and Charter Communications, the city has led construction of two broadband networks totalling over 200 route miles, serving businesses, institutions and residents. Using this infrastructure, the city introduced in 2000 a free high-speed Internet access service for all residents, backed by training services. Using its network, the city has attracted a new calling center company and working on development of an Internet hosting center operation. At the same time, its network operations generate over \$1 million in revenue for the city treasury.



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## **Nevada, Missouri, USA**

Over much of the past decade, Nevada (pronounced Ne-VAY-da), Missouri has been reinventing itself as an intelligent community. Like other rural communities, Nevada has struggled to survive in a changing economic climate. Each year, Nevada — which is about an hour's drive south of Kansas City — loses about half of its high school graduates. They leave the community to search for work or to pursue opportunities in higher education unavailable in Nevada. In fact, between 1980 and 1990, Nevada lost 3.9 percent of its population. In 1995, the city created the Nevada Telecommunity Development Corporation (NTDC). The heart of NTDC is the Nevada TeleCenter, which opened in 1997 on land donated by the state. It houses two interactive video classrooms for 25 students each; a satellite downlinked classroom for 50 participants; a multi-media production room equipped to produce educational and training materials; and five computer work stations for free public access to the Internet. In response, new companies have sprung up to help the private sector develop services that support local business, including Internet Service Providers and firms specializing in Web page development, e-commerce and advertising. NTDC has also introduced entrepreneurial training programs in cooperation with the University of Missouri. On the development agenda are telemedicine programs and a wireless local loop network for high-bandwidth users. As a result, local unemployment has dropped from 10% in 1991 to about 2.2% in 2000.

## **New York, New York, USA**

New York City was one of the prime beneficiaries of the Internet and dot-com surge. The rise of its Silicon Alley in downtown Manhattan leveraged the city's existing strengths in design, advertising and publishing into the growth of "new media." By the end of 1998, new media industries employed 250,000 people and generated an \$8.3 billion payroll, according to a PriceWaterhouseCoopers study. Beginning in 1995, city government began introducing programs to promote and extend the growth of the new media economy, including a city-sponsored venture capital conference, \$100 million worth of venture funds, and the Plug 'n' Go program, which provided incentives for the development of broadband-enabled office space. At the end of 1999, city government introduced a program called "Digital NYC: Wired to the World." Digital NYC provides seed funding to encourage nonprofit agencies to partner with property owners and technology service providers to develop and promote new high-tech districts. The program's goal is to extend Silicon Alley into clusters throughout the five boroughs of NYC.

## **Singapore**

This city-state at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula launched an ambitious broadband initiative called Singapore One at the end of 1996. The aim was to provide every citizen and business with a high-speed Internet connection, and to foster the development of an online economy benefiting all of its citizens. In April 2001, Singapore One entered its third phase. Having completed build-out of the network, Singapore's Infocomm Development Authority (IDA) is now focused on increasing the number of applications — from e-commerce to information-access to recreation — available to its citizens, and to incubate the formation of Digital Age businesses that can translate Singapore's leadership in trade and media into Internet leadership.



## **Sunderland, United Kingdom**

In 1991, this depressed former shipbuilding and mining city in the north of England launched a multi-pronged initiative to create a knowledge-based economy. The city persuaded a real estate developer to build the first, speculative building of what is now Doxford International, an award-winning 400,000 s/f office park that is European headquarters of Nike. Using funding from the European Community and the national government, Sunderland rebuilt its waterfront and created a new home for Sunderland University. The city created a Telematics Strategy in order ensure that citizens benefited from the new economy, established training programs, and launched business incubators. By 2000, the total of new jobs created passed the 8,500 mark, and in 2001, Sunderland achieved a new milestone by attracting an Internet data center company to open its first facility in the north.

## **HONORABLE MENTION**

### **Baltimore Digital Harbor, Baltimore, Maryland, USA**

For the public-private effort that has transformed a run-down waterfront into a bustling, mixed-use business and residential zone and the center of Baltimore's new media economy.

### **Greater Toronto Area, Ontario, Canada**

For outstanding marketing of its leadership in information technology and telecommunications (IT&T), and as a low-cost alternative to Silicon Valley and other tech centers, culminating in a 2000 announcement that the GTA was Canada's first Smart Community.

### **Tacoma, Washington USA**

For its broadband Click Network, developed in cooperation with Tacoma Power, that has brought over 100 new businesses to Tacoma since 1997 and has been instrumental in making the city a true competitor to its northern neighbor, Seattle.

### **Technopolis Oulu, Finland**

For the research and development exchange between Oulu University and the City of Oulu's Technical Research Center of Finland, which has transformed a sub-Arctic town into a global technological hub that has created 10,000 jobs and attracted technology players including Nokia, Sonera, Siemens, Sun Microsystems and Hewlett-Packard.

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**THE INTELLIGENT COMMUNITY FORUM (ICF)** is a special interest group within the World Teleport Association that focuses on the uses of broadband technology for economic development by communities large and small in both the developed and developing world. Because real estate is a critical part of urban development, ICF also addresses the development of intelligent buildings, Internet hosting centers and similar facilities. ICF conducts research, creates conference content, publishes newsletters and presents annual Awards for Intelligent Community and Intelligent Building developers. More information is available at [www.intelligentcommunity.org](http://www.intelligentcommunity.org).



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