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Connected Nation Unveils Innovative ‘Digital Works’ Program

*Sustainable Job Creation Program Bringing
Technology-Based Jobs to Local Communities*

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[Link to Governor’s Proclamation](#)

WASHINGTON, DC – Connected Nation this week is unveiling its innovative Digital Workssm program that is helping connect people to twenty-first century workforce opportunities while spurring community revitalization.

Today, Connected Nation and its Connect Ohio subsidiary held the grand opening for the first Digital Works center, located in Zanesville, Ohio at the Muskingum County Business Incubator. The program provides mentoring and training to workers seeking employment and places them in quality teleworking jobs.

Initial communities have been identified for expansion of the program and Connected Nation plans to establish as many as 10 new centers by the end of 2013. New communities are being sought for inclusion in the program, based on available community resources. The Zanesville location has already placed more than 40% of the initial trainee class, and expects 100% placement by the end of June.



“These technology-based jobs are a perfect solution for rural communities that have struggled with keeping pace in the digital economy,” said Connected Nation President

and COO Tom Ferree. “Digital Works is empowering communities to take control of their economic destiny. The e-commerce economy is booming as companies can now rely on technology to provide a regional and culturally adaptable solution for workforce requirements. The same information technology advances that ushered in the era of ‘out-sourcing’ now provide the economic opportunity for ‘rural’ sourcing.”

The Digital Works program creates jobs in areas facing high unemployment by leveraging broadband technology for call center and IT outsourcing. Extended training is available for HTML programming, and other technical positions as well. The program is providing an avenue for communities to create a job incubator, retaining workers in the area and attracting corporate jobs while providing a pathway for improving a worker’s competitive advantage in the twenty-first century workforce with specified coursework and training.

At the end of training, workers are placed in available positions that match their skills and interests. All jobs pay above minimum wage and the training provides opportunities for placement at levels for upward mobility. This is work that can be done from home or at the Digital Works center, which is provided through a partnership with the community. Jobs are readily available for qualified applicants and it is expected that up to 100% of trainees will be employed immediately after training is complete.

The Digital Works program aggressively pursues partnerships with telework employers to ensure a robust pipeline of jobs is available.

Many firms are seeking telecommuters rather than in-house employees that require the added expense of bricks and mortar. According toTeleworkResearchNetwork.com, telecommuting grew by 73% between 2005 and 2011 compared to only 4.3% growth of the overall workforce. Many work functions are being moved to “the cloud.” This creates a fast-growing need for cost-effective and skilled workers. As local capacity builds through the Digital Works program, communities will be able to leverage the workforce to recruit tech companies, not just traditional manufacturing facilities. Thousands of jobs are available to the underemployed and displaced rural workers. Communities benefit by offering younger workers an opportunity to earn a good living as part of a skilled workforce in their hometown.

The initial funding for the pilot program is provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Broadband Technology Opportunities Program.

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About Connected Nation: Connected Nation is a leading technology organization committed to bringing affordable high-speed Internet and broadband-enabled resources to all Americans. Connected Nation effectively raises the awareness of the value of broadband and related technologies by developing coalitions of influencers and enablers

for improving technology access, adoption, and use. Connected Nation works with consumers, community leaders, states, and technology providers and foundations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to develop and implement technology expansion programs with core competencies centered on a mission to improve digital inclusion for people and places previously underserved or overlooked. For more information, please visit: www.connectednation.org/.

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