

News Release

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WinstonNet to Celebrate Community Computer Project

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. – WinstonNet, a partnership to increase public access to computers and the Internet, will celebrate the opening of 11 community computer labs at an event set for 4:30 p.m., June 12 at the Carl H. Russell Sr. Recreation Center, 3521 Carver School Road.

WinstonNet plans to open 36 community computer labs in libraries, churches and recreation centers across Winston-Salem and Forsyth County. The Carl H. Russell Sr. Recreation Center is one of 11 locations that will be on-line by June 12. When the project is complete, about 225 computers will be available to local residents.

“WinstonNet’s goal is to bridge the ‘digital divide’ that exists in our community and to ensure that all residents have access to this powerful technology,” said Thomas K. Hearn Jr., president of Wake Forest University.

WinstonNet is part of !dealliance, a non-profit organization of education, government and business leaders with a shared vision for diversified technology-led economic development.

In addition to the Carl H. Russell Sr. Recreation Center, the 11 new labs are at the Sedge Garden, Sprague Street, 14th Street and Reynolds Park Recreation Centers; five community knowledge centers located at St. Benedict the Moor, St. James A.M.E., Union Baptist, Goler Memorial A.M.E. Zion and United Metropolitan Missionary Baptist; and the central branch of the Forsyth County Public Library.

The community computers share software through centralized servers. Each computer terminal has access to homework helpers, Internet-based learning tools, standard word processing software, and connections to employment, health, and social services information. A telephone Help Desk operated by volunteers will assist users with software and other questions.

Users can log on to any computer in the network and access their personalized accounts. Winston-Salem/Forsyth County is the first community in the country to offer this standard

community “desktop.” After school, for example, students can go to a library or recreation center and continue a computer project they started earlier.

North Carolina students are required to demonstrate computer skills at the end of eighth grade and before graduating. The community computer network helps ensure that all students have access to technology to develop and use these skills.

Partners in WinstonNet include the City of Winston-Salem, Community Development Corporation, Forsyth County, Forsyth Technical Community College, !dealliance, N.C. School of the Arts, Salem College, United Way of Forsyth County, Wake Forest University, Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce, Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools, Winston-Salem State University and Winston-Salem State University Center for Community Safety.

The 36 planned computer labs will be in 21 community and neighborhood centers, all locations of the Forsyth County Public Library, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Recreation Centers and Winston-Salem State University Community Knowledge Centers (WSSU-CKCs). These knowledge centers are housed in churches and agencies. Five

church community knowledge centers were established by Winston-Salem State University during the spring of 1999. The church knowledge centers are located at St. Benedict the Moor, St. James A.M.E., Union Baptist, Goler Memorial A.M.E. Zion, and United Metropolitan Missionary Baptist.

The Bethesda Center for the Homeless was established as a WSSU-CKC spring of 2003. Before the expansion, WinstonNet had 24 computers in 5 local agencies: Fellowship Home, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Catholic Social Services, Project HOPE, and Experiment in Self-Reliance.

The June 12 event will include brief remarks about the project, a demonstration of the computer lab and refreshments. The public is invited.

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