

Local residents should support Google effort

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Posted: 03/03/2010 12:00:00 AM MST
What can be done with a gigabit of Internet bandwidth?

It's a hard question to answer because there are so many different possibilities. It's the question Google is asking municipalities across the country, and Farmington would like to be the city that answers it.

The Mountain View, Calif., company that made its name in the Web search engine market is looking for a community to test its new fiber optic network. Google says the communities it selects will receive network speeds up to a gigabit at competitive prices.

A gigabit is an incredible amount of speed that can be difficult to describe in layman's terms. Theoretically, a gigabit network transfers files at a speed of 125 megabytes per second, enough to transfer a Blu-Ray HD disc in under seven minutes. Even with Comcast's recent upgrades to their service, it doesn't begin to scratch the surface on the amount of data a gigabit network could move.

The possibilities go far beyond better Internet access for consumers.

A gigabit opens an entire realm of new business possibilities for technology-related sectors that would covet such access at reasonable rates. It would encourage local entrepreneurship in e-commerce areas and could theoretically be a huge shot in the arm to the area's economy.

There is great potential for existing businesses in all areas to utilize Google's network as well. More and more business functions are being shifted into Web-based "cloud computing" applications; greater network speeds are required to keep up with the strain. Existing businesses could take advantage of this new trend and improve their services as a result.


Getting Google on board won't be easy. Farmington is far from the only community in the country seeking Google's bandwidth. A quick examination using the tech giant's own search engine reveals half a dozen cities that also have thrown their hat into the ring.

There is no way of knowing for certain what criteria Google will most consider, but the best bet for establishing Farmington's importance among candidate cities is to show our enthusiasm. That is the quality we have the most control over, and the one Google might respect the most.

We encourage all citizens to fill out the online recommendation form at <http://www.google.com/appserve/fiberrfi/public/options>.

The more people who do so, the more Google will see that Farmington is the right choice.

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