



Fort Wayne and FiOS:

Wired and Inspired to Compete in a Flat World

Calling all Lions and Gazelles: Sign up now at www.killerapp.com for the Killer App conference, April 30-May 2, 2007.

In his address kicking off the Tuesday Summit sessions, Fort Wayne Mayor Graham Richard, a former venture capitalist, described the benefits of his city's Verizon FiOS buildout and issued a warning to other mayors who want to compete in the increasingly "flat" world outlined by author Thomas Friedman.

In that world, fiber-borne bandwidth is an obvious advantage. In Fort Wayne, Richard pointed to:

- 900 new jobs due to Verizon FiOS.
- Over 128,000 homes and businesses connected.
- Partnerships with Raytheon and ITT Industries.
- Listing as 16th out of the 50 best places for entrepreneurial businesses by Inc.com.
- A patent rate per person 50 times the national average, according to the Northeast Indiana Investment Board.

The city also uses broadband to manage its public works – maintenance tracking and work orders, for instance – and its roadways in real time, adjusting traffic signals to meet flow demands, safety, weather conditions and even Homeland Security emergencies. There's active embracing of a statewide "regional public safety academy" initiative, combining more than 1,000 law enforcement personnel and almost 2,000 fire-safety first



Eric Cevis, VP at Verizon Enhanced Communities, introduces the Honorable Mayor Graham Richard at the 2006 BBP Summit.

responders in a 12-country, 650,000-population area around Fort Wayne.

Not Just Bandwidth

Richard said, however, that these ben-

efits do not come automatically. He described first the need for any city to invest in all infrastructure – water, sewer, roads, parks, libraries, universities and the airport. That includes the "hu-



Fort Wayne Mayor Graham Richard keynotes the Broadband Summit.

man” infrastructure, with seemingly less glamorous strategies designed to reduce high school dropout rates and prepare students for the workforce – in

Second, he described the context in which citizen “iTeams” work to create new ideas for using the bandwidth. Several examples of those

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part through online mentoring. The entire city road infrastructure is subject to 3D digital stereo imaging. There’s a “green city” initiative to encourage energy conservation, improve air quality, and to expand 100 miles of greenways, parks and hiking trails.

teams – for education and senior outreach – have been covered in greater detail in this magazine in the past. He admitted that some of the work builds upon a pre-FiOS culture that started with state investment in educational networks. The area’s ACELink (Allen

County Education Network) ties together 87 schools, 3,000 teachers and 54,000 students into one broadband network for distance learning, teacher training, and virtual town hall meetings. It also provides gigabit-per-second sharing of library resources throughout the county.

That context is getting to be unusual in today’s political climate. Richard called for more bipartisan action and more public/private partnerships. There’s an innovators’ forum to stimulate that, and a new “seed capital fund” to encourage investment. One initiative, FACE (for Fiber optics Applications Center Excellence) seeks out and tests cutting-edge FTTH applications in education, health care, government services, entertainment and Homeland Security.

There’s an effort to redevelop Renaissance Pointe, a lower-income area with broadband-equipped homes.

His message to other political leaders is as follows:

- Keep your focus strategic; don’t micro-manage the present.
- Keep a bias for urgent action.
- Make sure the goals are measurable.
- Act locally, but keep global connections, and recognize global issues and impacts.
- Link talent, technology, tools and training.
- Remain bipartisan.
- Build trust.

The Warning

Less formally, he put it this way: “Every morning, somewhere in Africa, a pride of lions wakes up hungry. At the same time, a herd of gazelles starts moving, with the oldest, slowest, and sickest ones trying especially hard to avoid being the lions’ next meal.... Whether you are a lion or a gazelle, you’d better be off and running every day when the sun comes up.”

Graham Richard intends to keep his city running flat-out, in this increasingly flat world. Bandwidth helps. **BBP**