

**NATOA Announces Recipients of Community Broadband Awards
for Outstanding Endeavors to Bring Broadband to More
Communities and Consumers**

**Access Humboldt's DIGITAL REDWOODS Initiative
"Community Wireless Network of the Year"**

Alexandria, VA - September 9, 2009 - The National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) Board of Directors today announced the recipients of NATOA's 2009 Community Broadband Awards. These honors are awarded to exceptional leaders and innovative programs that champion community interests and broadband deployment in local communities nationwide. Recipients will receive their awards at NATOA's 29th Annual Conference, to be held in New Orleans from September 30 to October 2.

"NATOA's Community Broadband Awards proudly recognize the people, communities, and organizations that lead the nation in promoting community interests through broadband projects," said Mary Beth Henry, president of the NATOA Board of Directors.

The NATOA Community Broadband Awards recipients were chosen based on their extraordinary efforts, achievements, and innovation in community-based approaches to broadband. These individuals, organizations, and communities have distinguished themselves in the effort to ensure that more American communities and citizens benefit from new technology.

The 2009 Community Broadband Award for "Community Broadband Wireless Network of the Year" is **Digital Redwoods**, a long term initiative of Access Humboldt. Local projects include Digital Rio Dell, Access Humboldt Libraries and Eureka Muni-Hub, a series of municipal and community efforts that deliver broadband and digital media services to remote and rural communities on the North Coast of California.

"Digital Redwoods is built on the principle of 'digital ecology.' The goal is to create sustainable and healthy communications ecosystems that afford broadband media access serving local, diverse populations for public, education and government purposes," said Sean McLaughlin for Access Humboldt.

For more information, online <http://digitalredwoods.net>, or contact Access Humboldt, sean@accesshumboldt.net, c: (707) 616-2381, t: (707) 476-2783.

Other Award recipients announced today are:

Community Broadband Hero of the Year:

John L. Byrd, Mobile Command Unit leader and Sergeant of the

Harris County (TX) Sheriff's office, for building mobile command unit capabilities that, during and after Hurricane Ike, deployed to the affected area for a record 72 days to enable emergency communications and field emergency 911 calls. In the absence of this effort, the affected community would have been without emergency services during a major natural disaster.

Community Broadband Visionary of the Year:

Chris Vein, Chief Information Officer of the City and County of San Francisco, for providing free broadband Internet service to residents of San Francisco public housing, by piloting high-bandwidth health care services over fiber optics for vulnerable communities, and for demonstrating vision and innovation in community broadband solutions.

Community Broadband Organization of the Year:

City of Monticello, MN, for its vision and courage in planning a community fiber-to-the-home network and for fighting in the courts against an anti-competition incumbent for its right to determine its own broadband and economic future.

Community Broadband Project of the Year:

MI Connection, a public broadband communications network owned and operated by a consortium of municipalities in North Carolina that refused to accept sub-standard broadband and cable service and decided to deliver better quality themselves.

Community Broadband Fiber Network of the Year:

Bristol Virginia Utilities, for pioneering community fiber to the home and for demonstrating how true broadband can bring jobs and economic development to rural America.

For more information on the award recipients, the NATOA Community Broadband Awards, and NATOA's efforts to bring about a national broadband strategy that recognizes the vital and integral role of local governments, visit www.natoa.org or contact Tonya Rideout, acting executive director, or Mary Beth Henry, president, at (703) 519-8035.

NATOA promotes community interests in communications. A national trade association based in Alexandria, VA, NATOA represents local government jurisdictions and consortiums, including elected and appointed officials and staff, who oversee communications and cable television franchising.

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