

Connecting Arizona

Beth Gallob, Tech Connect Magazine
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A painfully slow Internet connection. A thing of the past for most in metro areas, but still a reality for many residents on the fringes. Or is it?

Not if network services provider TeleSpectra, LLC has anything to do with it.

With 90% of Arizona's communities having a population of 5,000 or less, Scottsdale-based TeleSpectra provides network services, including broadband Internet access and e-mail, to the rural parts of the Southwest—areas that would otherwise have little or no Internet service.



TeleSpectra's mission is to bring telecommunications services to as many rural areas in Arizona, and beyond, as possible.

The ownership and operation of a statewide network is something TeleSpectra CEO, Michael McHale, feels is fairly unique to the nation. "Wiring rural Arizona enables significant economic development, creating opportunities for local distribution partners and small businesses to spring up,"

In 2003, with the help of a federal grant, TeleSpectra brought broadband to the southwestern Arizona town of Wellton—an effort that goes beyond just residential uses. Wellton's police, fire and medical outfits now have access to speedier communications—which can translate into more saved lives.

According to McHale, other subsequent projects will soon take effect this year within as many as 10 Arizona communities. "Smaller communities can now attract company headquarters or branch offices," explains McHale. "Technology development occurring at the state universities can also be marketed to rural as well as metro areas. Broadband access makes Arizona's towns, not just its cities, more competitive."

TeleSpectra's efforts have not gone unrecognized. The company was recently named Innovator of the Year in the service company category at the 2003 Governor's Celebration of Innovation awards. The company's policy is innovation by application. Translation: It's not just about technology, but what you do with it.

"I believe we were selected for the award because we took an established technology and way of doing business and redefined it to deliver state-of-the-art services to communities who wouldn't otherwise see them," says the mild-mannered, but direct McHale. "Some companies have continued down the familiar road of selling basic services to the same markets. We took a fresh look and figured out how to take an existing asset, redefine it, and apply it to another set of needs. That's the key."

The notion of statewide broadband accessibility is an attractive one—one that equates to a sophisticated knowledge-based economy, conducive to business development and expansion. And technology innovator TeleSpectra is doing its part to add to this idea, one community at a time.

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