



Bristol Virginia Honored On World Stage As Intelligent Community at International Summit

BRISTOL, Va. – The city of Bristol Virginia was honored as a leading Intelligent Community for 2009 during a ceremony Friday at the “Building the Broadband Economy 2009” summit held in Brooklyn, N.Y. Bristol was vying for this year’s Intelligent Community of the Year title against six other cities worldwide. Representatives from Bristol Virginia received a trophy and gift from New York City Councilwoman Gale A. Brewer and Mayor Maeng of Gangnam-gu, Seoul, Korea, last year’s Intelligent Community of the Year winner. Bristol was honored as a “Top Seven” location around the globe for strategically using advanced broadband to further the economic efforts of both the city and Southwest Virginia.

The Intelligent Community of the Year competition is sponsored by the New York-based Intelligent Community Forum (ICF), an international think-tank that studies the economic and social development of the 21st century community. The ICF’s annual Intelligent Community of the Year competition involves a 10-month global search to find locations that work at building “prosperity and social inclusion” in what the judges call an emerging Broadband Economy.

“It is humbling to be included among such an elite group,” said Bristol Virginia Mayor Jim Rector, who, with Bristol Virginia Utilities Board Chairman Paul Hurley, accepted the trophy. “We never envisioned that the fiber-optic network we launched in 2003 to offer cable, Internet and telephone service to Bristol Virginia customers would put us on the map globally. “But the partnerships and collaboration that evolved with organizations such as the Cumberland Plateau Company in Russell County to expand this advanced network across Southwest Virginia’s coalfield counties, giving them connectivity to the world, is nothing short of phenomenal.”

Hurley praised the visionary leadership both locally and regionally. “None of this could have happened without the foresight of members of our board of directors over the past 10 years who made the decisions to invest in advanced broadband,” he said. “The management team and employees of BVU also deserve to be applauded for their hard work. And I want to credit the legislative, economic development and community leaders across our region for breathing new life into our economy through this broadband venture. Even during these tough economic times, broadband offers new commerce opportunities to businesses and gives us hope for a viable economic future.”

The city of Bristol Virginia was the only American city, and the smallest, still under consideration for the 2009 Intelligent Community of the Year. This year’s winner was _____, joining 11 other locations globally that have won the award since 1999.

Bristol Virginia has plans to re-enter the Intelligent Community of the Year competition in 2010. The city and its 64-year-old utility company, Bristol Virginia Utilities, were nominated as a “Top 7” Intelligent Community based on their pioneering efforts in municipal broadband, both locally and across Southwest Virginia, during the past five years. BVU partnered with Cumberland Plateau Company, headquartered in Lebanon, Va., to extend the broadband network to the counties of Russell, Tazewell, Buchanan and Dickenson. This expansion was credited for decisions by technology giants CGI and Northrop Grumman to locate in Lebanon, bringing high-paying jobs, greater educational opportunities and an economic boost to the area.

BVU is acknowledged as the first municipal utility in the United States to deploy an all-fiber network offering the triple play of voice, video and data services. Other awards received by Bristol Virginia and Bristol Virginia Utilities include the 2008 National League of Cities’ Gold Award for Municipal Excellence; Virginia Governor’s Technology Award (2008); the Smart Community Award (2008) from *Last Mile* magazine; American Public Power Association Community Service Award (2008); and the Cornerstone Award for Outstanding Customer Service (2007) from *Broadband Properties Magazine*.

About ICF

The Intelligent Community Forum (www.intelligentcommunity.org) seeks to share the secrets of success of the world's intelligent communities in adapting to the demands of the broadband economy by conducting research, hosting events, publishing newsletters and producing an international awards program.

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