

KEY PRIORITIES

- Collaborative community effort, based on input from citizens of Rutherford County
- Avoid duplication or replacement of existing services/resources
- Provide expanded support and resources to grow existing small businesses
- Provide expanded support and resources to enable establishment of new small businesses
- Set Rutherford County apart as a technologically advanced community

OBJECTIVES:

- Support local and small businesses
- Grow new entrepreneurs
- Support technology based economic development
- Provide Public access to the latest technology
- Be self sustaining

FOOTHILLS CONNECT PARTNERS

The following are making important contributions to the planning process:

Rutherford County Government
Economic Development Commission
Isothermal Community College
Chamber of Commerce
Rutherford County Schools
Realize Rutherford

PROJECT TIMELINE

Community Input & Information Gathering:
August – December 2004
(Public forums, focus groups, community presentations)

Fundraising:
August 2004 – December 2005

Business Plan Development:
January – April 2005

Target for Center to be Operational:
Summer 2005

For More Information Contact:

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FoothillsConnect.com

Four Existing Centers in North Carolina:

- Martin County: www.nctelecenter.com
- Alleghany County: www.blueridgebdc.org
- Duplin County: www.telecenters.org
- Cherokee County: www.tccc.cc.nc.us

Two Centers Currently in the Planning Stage:

- Rutherford County: www.FoothillsConnect.com
- Rockingham County: www.rockbizz.org

FOOTHILLS CONNECT

Business and Technology Center



WWW.FOOTHILLSCONNECT.COM

BRINGING INOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICES TO THE FOOTHILLS OF NORTH CAROLINA



WHAT IS A BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY CENTER?

The Business and Technology Center provides multi-purpose technology, business, training, and public access centers whose mission is to strengthen and grow the economy, create jobs, and make new income, educational, and civic opportunities possible for businesses and communities in rural North Carolina.

Through the use of technology, Foothills Connect will help individuals and enterprises access resources and acquire and use the knowledge and skills necessary to participate successfully in a digital economy.

The Center will:



- Work with business/economic development groups, educational institutions, and local governments

- Provide programs and services to businesses and entrepreneurs to build economic strength in the community
- Build community awareness of the obtainable possibilities through technology and access to the Internet
- Provide opportunities for individuals and groups to acquire digital literacy and Internet skills
- Be an important tool in recruiting new business to Rutherford County and in growing existing business

BUILDING STRONG BUSINESSES



The Center can offer companies the ability to use current business and technical services, resources and training while being located in a rural environment.

The Center will have outstanding information and communication technology capabilities, that will equip individuals to do business anywhere in the world.

It is also important that employees have excellent educational and training choices on an ongoing basis. The Center is working hand-in-hand with Isothermal Community College and all the resource that the collegiate system offers.



WHY NOW?

Over the past five years, Rutherford County has experienced a drastic downturn in economic circumstances. Lay-offs and terminations in the traditional industries of furniture and textiles have resulted in the loss of more than 5,700 jobs since 1998.

This Center will be an ideal resource for retraining our workforce. The process of developing the Business Plan for the Center will involve small business owners, entrepreneurs, educators, and other interested citizens in the effort to determine the needs of the community.

FUNDING



Rutherford County has been awarded \$400,000 from the NC Rural Center for the development of a Business and Technology Center. Rutherford County has also given \$230,000 for the planning and ongoing operational expenses.

Grants are being pursued for the first few years in order to renovate a building and purchase needed equipment.

