

High tech training set for Vinton

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Staff Report
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VINTON – New programs to teach high tech skills and business training to residents of remote areas of Ohio, including the village of Vinton, are being made available thanks to a partnership effort between several organizations.

The program will also result in Vinton area residents being able to receive broadband Internet access.

The University of Rio Grande/Rio Grande Community College is involved with the local efforts to bring these services to southern Ohio as part of the partnership.

MindLeaders, an e-learning and organizational development corporation, has partnered with Connecting Rural Ohio (CRO) to develop the program. CRO is a grant-funded program sponsored by Ohio State University.

The partnership between the e-learning company and the non-profit organization is designed to bring high tech training and business training to state residents across Ohio. In southern Ohio, Rio Grande is working with the two organizations on the program.

The courses will initially be available to Vinton residents.

“MindLeaders participation allows us to offer hundreds of e-learning courses on everything from basic computer literacy skills to sales training,” said Alan Escovitz, director of external affairs, office of the chief information officer at OSU.

He explained that a lack of training and educational resources in rural areas often results in limited career choices.

“By bringing an extensive e-learning course catalog to rural areas, CRO and MindLeaders are providing Ohioans with the training and education needed to find high demand, well paying jobs,” Escovitz said.

The CRO project is part of a broader effort by various agencies and groups, such as Rio Grande, to link instruction and learning, teachers and students, schools, homes and businesses with broadband Internet connectivity.

OARnet is playing a leading role in the extension of Internet technology services to rural Ohio areas such as Vinton through the Connecting Rural Ohio Wireless Neighborhood project. OARnet and the OSU Office of the CIO, with major funding from the American Distance Education Consortium and the Ohio Community Computing Network, are bringing Internet connectivity to Vinton from a satellite located 23,000 miles out in space.

The broadband connectivity is much faster than dial-up Internet service, and will provide numerous benefits to Vinton residents. The connectivity provides educational services to adult learners, while also providing job-training opportunities for low-income residents.

The broadband service is also a valuable resource for police and fire departments, libraries and other community services. OARnet is a division of the Ohio Supercomputer Center, which is a technology initiative of the Ohio Board of Regents.

OARnet previously brought broadband Internet services to New Straitsville in Perry County. The residents of the village were also able to take computer skill courses and other classes as part of the program.

In addition to being able to take the MindLeaders courses, those in the program will also have access to the Ohio Learning Network's "E 4 ME" course, which is a free class designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of online and distance learning.

"The Connecting Rural Ohio program benefits all of Ohio," said Carol Clark, founder and chair of MindLeaders. "This program provides rural Ohioans with access to information, news and technology that those of us in more populated areas take for granted. MindLeaders believes in this program and is happy to offer our E-learning through CRO."

For more information on the program, call Kingsley Meyer, director of Campus Computing and Networking at Rio Grande, at (800) 282-7201.