

CONNECT AND GROW: TOOLS TO THRIVE IN THE 21ST CENTURY DIGITAL ECONOMY

“U.S. small businesses have embraced broadband and Internet access as a central and essential part of their business operations and strategies. Indeed, broadband is central to U.S. small businesses in ways that it is not to individuals. “ - *The Impact of Broadband Speed and Price on Small Business*, U.S. Small Business Administration (Nov. 2010)

The Stokes County Digital Economy Pilot Project Tools:

- a unique one-page assessment comparing your business to its peers with recommendations for improvement;
- access to an online resource center with self-guided tutorials; and
- an elective coaching session with a local businesses advisor, including an optional scenario generator to guide your business in developing a digital strategy.

Businesses in Stokes County are invited to join NC Broadband, a Division of the North Carolina Department of Commerce, in partnership with Strategic Networks Group, in a pilot project to research how North Carolina small businesses can become more competitive in the 21st century digital economy through broadband utilization.

The Internet is a source of opportunities and challenges for small businesses.

Do you find yourself asking:

- Which of the ever-increasing applications can deliver the greatest return on investment?
- What is my competition doing online?
- How can I learn more about the new web-based tools and strategies to improve our business processes and service deliveries?

You don't need to be a technology expert for your business to benefit from better use of the Internet and online tools. This pilot project will help make sure you are aware of the technology tools needed to be competitive in today's broadband-powered digital economy.

Through April 30th, your business and others in Stokes County will have the opportunity to take a confidential assessment of your business practices related to the Internet. Assessment results will be used to create a company-specific Digital Economy index (DEi) scorecard that can provide customized suggestions for how to use online tools to improve business efficiencies and profitability. This service is available to your business at no cost.

The DEi Scorecard enables you to:

- determine top opportunities to add to your online business activities;
- review the potential financial benefits for your business by using new online applications;
- learn how to integrate more efficient online processes into your business; and
- receive advice and support from business advisers to develop and execute your own plan.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

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or visit www.ncbroadband.com/pilot to participate.