Ten Simple Things Your Community Can Do

Key concepts
- There is always something you can do
- Funding issues should never be an obstacle to making progress
- Many low cost or no cost activities can have impressive results

1 — **Book Club** - Form a study group to read a futures-oriented book relevant to community or economic development each month. Meet once a month, and use a mailing list or discussion forum to encourage discussion.

2 — **Community portal** - Use one of the easy to manage Open Source products like Drupal to create a lively community portal Web site. Note: traffic at all other Web sites in the community will go up!

3 — **Small business seminar** - Help small businesses in your region by bringing in a knowledgeable speaker to provide solid, practical advice on making the Web work for small businesses. Hint: Don't use local Web design firms; they have a built in conflict of interest.

4 — **Civic groups online** - Help community and civic groups make better use of the Web by holding a seminar that demos some of the new Web site management tools. Hint: When civic groups use the Web, meeting attendance goes up.

5 — **B2B Fair** - Hold a business to business technology fair to help small businesses learn about new products and services from businesses already in the community.

6 — **Lunch** - Instead of complaining that elected leaders don't understand the importance of technology and telecommunications to the community, start a lunch program. Have a group take a different elected leader to lunch weekly.

7 — **Breakfast** - Start a monthly "Futures Breakfast" group that meets to hear short presentations on emerging trends and concepts relevant to business and economic development interests in the community.

8 — **WiFi public hotspot** - Get people downtown by providing free high speed wireless Internet access. Communities doing this report more people, especially younger people, returning to downtown areas. Put the hotspot near restaurants and gathering places.

9 — **Work with builders** - Don't allow another home or office building built in your region without being wired for broadband. Help builders see the value of adding this in (it is very inexpensive) and market your region's plans to be "Internet ready."

10 — **Free email for everyone** - This is easy and inexpensive to do. The library can be a great partner, as people who do not have access at home can visit the library to check their email. Shouldn't everyone have an address in cyberspace?

Tips for success

- Do small things. Many projects are "too big" for the resources available, and inevitably fail.
- Do small things well. Small successes inspire confidence and over time, produce "big" results.
- Do several small things. Some projects will work, some won't. The ones that do work well will preserve momentum.