

Communication and Technology

Systems of sending and receiving messages, such as wire, telephone, cable television and wireless systems.

Computers in Our Future (CIOF), an active community collaborative, has established computer centers in each of the four geographic areas of the county – Chester, Greenville, Quincy, and Portola. Funded by the California Wellness Foundation and administered by the Plumas County Public Health Agency, the program has provided open access and training to more than 2,6 participants since January 1998. A quarter of 14 – 23 year olds in the county have used the centers which are open at all sites in the afternoons, Monday through Friday. The Healthy Plumas Online Project extends access to senior nutrition centers, public housing, and family resource centers.

CIOF is a springboard for technology-related projects, including:

- A community-based health web-site for access to health care resources, health care education, prevention and intervention;
- Computers and Internet connectivity for Senior Nutrition Sites, public housing, and family resource centers.
- Coordination and dialogue among service organizations, agencies, community college, school district and businesses on community technology and infrastructure needs.
- Partnering with school sites to conduct basic computer training and special week-end workshops, and
- A web site for special needs individuals, families, and providers and adaptive computer equipment, specialized software and training.

Plumas County children have extremely high access to computers in the classroom compared to California (6 students per computer in the county compared to 10 in the state), with 32 classrooms wired for internet access. Plumas Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative provides internet access to local residents.

As described earlier, Plumas Corporation sponsored a Fiber Optics Feasibility Study in 1996, to explore the best options for improving fiber optic telecommunication technology in the county, and in so doing, improve the ability to attract new business to the area.

Telephone and Cable Television. Telephone service is available from one of two providers: Pacific Bell, which serves Quincy and the eastern part of the county, and Citizens Utilities, which provides service in northern Plumas County. A transcontinental fiber optics transmission line was completed through Plumas County in 1989. The line, owned by US Sprint, runs along the right of way for the Union Pacific Railroad mainline. In 1994, television reception was available in Plumas County either by satellite or through one of three cable companies: Feather River Cable, serving central and eastern Plumas; Quincy Community TV, serving Quincy and East Quincy; and Jones Spacelink, serving northern Plumas County.

Community Input

Residents of each community in the county participated in community meetings or completed surveys which were tabulated separately for adults and teens. At the community meetings, each participant was asked to name key issues in fourteen areas and then to prioritize their top five local and top three countywide priorities, by using red dots for local and blue dots for countywide priorities. Therefore the number of times an item was mentioned in a community meeting would not match the number of dots. Respondents to the surveys were asked to comment on each of the fourteen areas and to set three priorities for local and countywide improvements. The survey totals show the number of times a topic was commented upon in a survey. Each respondent had several opportunities to comment on each area and generally took that opportunity. The number does not address the range of comments within a topic, for instance, “more cable” and “no cable” or simply the comment “yes.” The “total” column adds up all the dots, participants and responses from the surveys. Each response was counted and reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of Input about Communications and Technology from Community Meetings and Adult and Teen Surveys, by Community

	Community Meetings			Adult Survey	Teen Surveys	Total
	Red	Blue	#			
Chester/Lake Almanor	18	5	37	57	39	156
Indian Valley	7	5	11	20	1	44
Mohawk Valley	28	11	16	42	2	130
Portola	12	5	21	31	8	77
Quincy	3	1	8	19	99	77

Table 2 shows the number of responses in the subtopics mentioned most frequently in the area of communications and technology, by community and type of input. They are listed in the order of most frequently mentioned, from most frequently to least.

Table 2: Most Frequently Raised Issues within Communications and Technology, by Community and Type of Input

CM = Community Meetings T = Teen Surveys A = Adult Surveys	Total			Chester/Lake Almanor			Indian Valley			Mohawk Valley			Portola			Quincy		
	CM	A	T	CM	A	T	CM	A	T	CM	A	T	CM	A	T	CM	A	T
DSL/Cable	18	24	34	9	7	3	1	1		5	8		2	2		1	6	31
Upgrade	6	21	39		1	16		1	1	2	10		4	4	3		5	19
Wireless/Cell phone	11	9	7	4			1	2		5	5	1	1	1			1	6
Get phone companies to work together	7	16	2	4	4	2	1	7			5		2					
Don't upgrade	6	4	14	3	1	3	2				2	1	1				1	10
Radio	3	3	11	1	1	1				1	1		1				1	10
TV	6	4	5	1		2				2	2		2	2	1	1		2
High tech businesses	6	6	3	1		1	3	1			2		2	1			2	2
Fiber optics	7	6	1	4	1		1	1			1		2	2			1	1
Doing fine	0	5	8		3	4					1			1				4
Newspapers	3	6	4		2		2	4					1					4
Computer classes	8	2	0	5									3	2				

Detail of categories in Table 2:

- DSL/Cable: this includes any mention of DSL or cable for faster internet services.
- Upgrade: this includes the general statement of improvement of the systems.
- Wireless/Cell phone: this includes any mention of need to improve cell phone access in the County, particularly in places where access is difficult.
- Get phone companies to work together: this includes any mention of the two phone companies improving service.
- Don't upgrade: this includes comments that this is a low priority and there is no need to do so.
- Radio: this includes comments that radio should be improved, including access to more stations.
- TV: this includes more access in the county and more local control.
- High tech businesses: this includes comments specifically about high tech business. This is also raised in the business monograph.
- Fiber optics: this includes mention of fiber optics specifically.
- Doing fine: this includes any comments specifically relating to this area being satisfactory.
- Newspapers: this includes mention of improving the local newspapers, in terms of content, local news and editorial content.
- Computer classes: this includes mention of computer classes within the community.

Sources:

Building Community Capacity Workshop: Summary of Previous Community Assessments.

Plumas Corporation, Plumas County Fiber Optics Feasibility Report. June 1996.