

Wayne County Business & Industry Sector

Why Is This Important?

Today, a number of factors are forcing businesses to change time-honored models of operation, including global competition, partnering/outsourcing and demand for more personalized services. Each of these trends can save businesses time and money, but they require a sound technological infrastructure. The good news is that while these trends are becoming more prevalent, the costs of technology are falling. Businesses cannot be sheltered from competitors. The reality is that Wayne County businesses must adapt to the changing world in which they operate. Businesses have to learn the tools of the networked economy and innovate in order to survive.

The business & industry sector often experiences the most direct benefit of high-speed Internet with increased sales, profit and growth. However, many businesses and industries are utilizing high-speed Internet to simplify processes, increase efficiency and develop new marketing methods. While a company's employees benefit immediately from Broadband implementation, the consumer also ultimately sees lower prices and better quality.

Increased benefits from the implementation of high-speed Internet are not just for large corporations. For smaller businesses, technology creates an even playing field with much larger companies. eCommerce, the buying and selling of goods over the Internet, allows small or even home-based businesses to operate and sell their goods on a national and sometimes international scale. Where small businesses were once limited to only local customers they could attract through local advertising and word of mouth, the Internet now allows them to attract customers across the globe.

Utilizing Broadband and technology, businesses with multiple locations can save money by implementing

Wayne County Business & Industry

- Wayne County Economic Development Council, www.waynecountyedc.com
- Wooster Area Chamber Commerce, www.woosterchamber.com
- Ohio Economic Development, www.ecodevdirectory.com/ohio.htm
- Ohio Chamber Of Commerce, www.ohiochamber.com
- Ohio Department of Development, www.odod.state.oh.us
- ODOD Office of Policy Research and Strategic Planning, www.odod.state.oh.us/research

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). VoIP allows businesses to call between those locations with little or no costs. It allows users to travel anywhere in the world and still make and receive phone calls. Additionally, VoIP allows for collaboration not available when using traditional telephone methods.

Technology has allowed larger businesses to maximize efficiency in order to better serve customers. Email, intranets, paperless operations and automated logistics processes are just a few examples of how the Internet is allowing large companies to work with much greater efficiency and at lower costs. These practices allow those businesses to expand into other markets, grow their companies and even pass the savings on to their customers.

Where Are We Today?

Wayne County residents utilize the Internet to conduct business through a variety of methods at a rate in line with the state average. Uses of the Internet by Wayne County residents are as follows:

- 78% of residents research products online (77% statewide)
- 78% of residents purchase products online (70% statewide)
- 55% of residents use online banking (55% statewide)
- 44% of residents search for jobs online (50% statewide)
- 20% of residents buy, sell or trade investments online (19% statewide)

According to Ohio's March 2009 Labor Market Information, Wayne County's unemployment rate is currently 9.7%. The county's largest employers by type are:

- Manufacturing with 13,523 employees
- Trade, Transportation, and Utilities with 8,327 employees
- Local Government with 5,604 employees

Within the business & industry sector, technology and Broadband are viewed as vital to the future growth of the Wayne County economy.

The Wooster Area Chamber of Commerce, www.woosterchamber.com, and Orrville Area Chamber of Commerce, www.orrvillechamber.com, are designed to meet community needs. Among other things, they

are a civic clearinghouse, a public relations counselor, a legislative representative, an information bureau and a research and promotion medium. They are often the first place tourists, businesses and those seeking residential/business relocation turn to for information about the county.

The Wayne County Economic Development Council (WEDC) is a private organization dedicated to the economic development of Northeast Ohio. As the lead economic development organization for Wayne County, its role is to stimulate new investment and job growth through business expansion and attraction initiatives. It's funding is derived from public and private sources and it is governed by a 30 member Board of Directors representing a diverse set of interests.

Media services in Wayne County are beginning to utilize the Internet and broadband services to expand their offerings to readers, listeners and viewers. Wayne County media services with online presences currently include:

Wooster Daily Record, www.the-daily-record.com

WKVX/KQKT Radio Station, www.wqkt.com

Larger businesses in Wayne County generally have broadband connections and use broadband applications extensively. There are some small businesses that have not subscribed to broadband service and are using dial up and some that do not have internet access at all. A number of businesses have websites, although many are just informational. Training and education is a need for many small businesses and technology funding is a constant barrier for these organizations.

Business & Industry Sector Assessment Overview			
Category	Current Assessment	Future Vision	Additional Comments
Networked Places	3	3	
Applications & Services	3	4	
Leadership	3	4	

The Wayne County eCommunity Leadership Team found that the business & industry sector is just beginning to use technology to its advantage and believes the Internet to be essential to business operations.

- **Networked Places** – In the category of networked places, Wayne County's business & industry

sector is currently at stage 3 on a 0 to 5 scale. Most office employees have always-on connections to the Internet at their desks. Some mobile workers have laptop computers and can access the office network remotely. Affordable videoconferencing facilities are available in the community.

- **Applications & Services** – In the category of technology applications & services, the business & industry sector is currently at stage 3 on a 0 to 5 scale. Some businesses outsource most of their computing services. Some retailers and manufacturers sell goods out of state or internationally. Some employees work remotely, some out of state.
- **Leadership** – In terms of technology leadership within the business & industry community, Wayne County is currently at stage 3 on a 0 to 5 scale. Some businesses permit some employees periodically to telework. Some businesses encourage employees to take work-related classes offline. Employee training on new technology is a priority.

Where Do We Need To Be?

While the Wayne County eCommunity Leadership Team found that business and industry's current use of technology is somewhat limited, the team has an aggressive vision for how the sector should be using technology in two years. The team has set goals to move networked places, applications & services and leadership from stage 3 to stage 4, all on a 0 to 5 scale. The team's vision includes:

- All businesses have access to affordable broadband service and most have subscribed to the service.
- There are education and training services available to support small business in the county.
- There is more use of shared services across the business community in Wayne County as it pertains to broadband, broadband applications and support.
- There is extensive use of mobile broadband service by field employees.
- Most office employees have always-on connections to the Internet at their desks. Some mobile workers have laptop computers and can access the office network remotely. Affordable videoconferencing facilities are available in the community.
- Some businesses outsource most of their computing services. Some retailers and manufacturers sell goods out of state or internationally. Some employees work remotely, some out of state.
- Some businesses permit some employees to telework one or two days a week. Some businesses encourage employees to take work-related courses online. Businesses are working with educational partners to raise workforce skill levels.

In Wayne County, the median commute to work is roughly 20 minutes for 54,487 people. Finding a way to enable telecommuting for 25% of these workers would result in over \$12 million in savings on gas alone (30 miles/20 miles/gal x \$2.55/gal x 240 day/yr x 13,621). On an individual basis, this is over \$900 per year per commuter, plus the environmental impact from reduced emissions and carbon credits.

How Do We Get There?

Project Ideas

- Work with existing and or new providers to extend affordable broadband service throughout the county, including mobile wireless broadband service.
- Explore education and training opportunities that could be made available to small businesses.
- Identify areas where it may be possible for businesses to share services and work through organizations like to Chamber of Commerce to leverage and implement such opportunities.
- Secure additional bandwidth for the Wayne County Economic Development Council.

Other Potential Projects

- Promote Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and encourage its use among businesses as a way to save money.
- Create a high-tech center to display technology infrastructure and technology tools for employees.
- Develop a directory for local information technology services in the county including business-to-business opportunities.
- Create a media campaign to help consumers and businesses understand the benefits of high-speed services and the Internet.

The eCommunity Leaders within the Business and Industry sector include:

Jeff Griffin, Wooster Chamber of Commerce

Rod Crider, Wayne County Economic Development Council

In working toward the advancement of the business sector goals, Connect Ohio recommends that additional participants be brought into the process, which may include technology providers, subject matter



experts, community organizations which serve the business community and the resources of agencies and commercial providers of products and services to the business sector.

Dave Davidson State Operations Manager for Connect Ohio will continue to work with the business sector leaders to advance selected projects toward their completion. By leveraging Connect Ohio's project management process, its research information, and its partners, projects will be defined, developed, and reviewed to help assure that the local teams are equipped to execute them. Connect Ohio will assist in the identification of funding sources, introducing technical resources, and helping to define the measurable goals that will ensure that the projects are actionable, measurable, and valuable.