

The Hill Country View

The Internet Is Just Bigger In Texas

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Guest Commentator

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Barely 50 years ago, a group of Texans got together and vowed to bring telephone service to the rough Texas Hill Country north of San Antonio. It took those pioneers four years to make their first phone call, but that heralded the birth of the modern telephone system in the sparsely populated region.

Those pioneers of technology wouldn't recognize today's lifestyle, where the residents of 11 counties north of San Antonio have the same high-speed access to the world as people in Houston or New York or Tokyo.

Such is the power of the Internet. Not only does it open a world of opportunity, but also it is accessible to everyone, regardless of location. Today people in communities such as Bulverde, Boerne and Canyon Lake can shop from the finest stores and sell their collectibles to markets around the world, without leaving their homes. Our young people have online access to virtually any reference material, and when they graduate, they don't have to go to the big city for career opportunities. With telecommuting and broadband access, they can work from here for large corporations or start their own businesses and reach customers around the world.

Tomorrow, the advent of technologies collectively known as Web 2.0 will bring us high-quality medical imaging and specialist consultations right from our home or local physicians' offices - without the inconvenience and expense of traveling to major medical centers. Broadband innovation and investment can have a substantial impact on many different communities of people.

Legislative initiatives such as a bill co-sponsored by Rep. Ciro Rodriguez, which established the Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Program, depend on widespread broadband deployment. This program would assist institutions in acquiring and implementing technology to improve the quality and delivery of educational services.

The high-speed Internet offers many opportunities to enhance our way of life in the Texas Hill Country. Robert Hunt is vice president of regulatory affairs and corporate development for the Guadalupe Valley Telecommunications Corporation.