

The Rahall Report

News and Views From Capitol Hill



Bringing West Virginia Closer to the World

Today, I'm writing to you about an emerging new technology in the field of telecommunications. I'm excited about the jobs and services the "Information Highway" will bring to West Virginia. This new technology is the creation of a world wide network of computers, which allows huge amounts of information to be transmitted any where at unbelievable speeds. Such networks will make available tremendous amounts of information to the computer on your desk. The network will allow you to watch a movie whenever you want, play chess with friends across the country, look up and read any book in the Library of Congress, and order your pizza for dinner. The world is getting smaller all the time, and with the advent of this new technology, the world will grow smaller, but as the world continues to shrink, it brings West Virginia closer to the rest of the world.

People have always settled and built their businesses around major areas of commerce. First people did business by water, then by rail, and finally by highways and air. Some predict that the new area of commerce will be the electronic marketplaces located on computer networks. The time will come when people will run their businesses on information networks. Currently, there are many successful businesses that operate solely on existing computer networks. A network will be a great place to run a business because the market is huge, and it provides an excellent media to advertise and present products. More importantly, you can run these businesses from any location, since all you need is a link to a network. A West Virginia retail firm will be able to compete with a retail firm based in New York City, because location will no longer be an issue. These new businesses also mean new jobs.

The current proposed plans for a telecommunications network calls for providing the proper network connections to all homes, classrooms and businesses in the United States, including rural and secluded areas. With the combination of falling computer prices and improvements in technology this network will be accessible to all.

I believe that the future for West Virginia and the U.S., relies in large part on advancing technologies. These technologies will enable us to increase our commerce here in the United States and abroad, and will keep West Virginia and our country at an advantage.