

Conference planned for spring

The Spring Greater Williamsport Technology Futures Conference will be held Wednesday April 25, at the Field House at the Pennsylvania College of Technology. The goals of the conference are:

- Learn the "pain points" of area companies.
- Learn how area companies innovate.
- Provide ideas for technology-driven economic development.
- Learn how technology companies find and serve customers in the region.
- Help existing companies and entrepreneurs understand how to leverage state resources and programs.
- Tie all of these together and create technology-driven economic development.

On the Web: www.williamsporttechregion.com



Bits & BYTES

ANNA GRIFFITH

Tech Futures has ambitious agenda

"Ideas are somewhat like babies—they are born small, immature, and shapeless. They are promise rather than fulfillment. In the innovative company executives do not say, "This is a damn-fool idea." Instead they ask, "What would be needed to make this embryonic, half-baked, foolish idea into something that makes sense, that is an opportunity for us?"

—Peter Drucker, *The Frontiers of Management* (1986)

And that is how The Greater Williamsport Technology Futures Organization got started.

Last year, a small group of met to discuss how to focus the community on technology-driven economic development.

As a result, the group held a conference on the topic on Oct. 11, 2006. The enthusiasm, energy and excitement generated through the planning and execution of the conference was more than any of us could have expected.

Many stakeholders in the community agreed that the effort needed to continue. Thus, the Greater Williamsport Technology Futures Organization, or Tech Futures, was formed and affiliated with the Williamsport-Lycoming Chamber of Commerce.

The mission was defined as follows: "The Greater Williamsport Technology Futures organization is united under a shared vision for technology advancement and economic development.

"The focus of the Greater Williamsport Technology Futures Organization is to bring together people who have a vital interest in moving the Williamsport region forward through innovation."

The first question most people ask after reading the mission is, "What exactly do you mean by innovation?"

Well, Peter Drucker has many applicable quotes. Here's one: "Innovation is a change that creates a new dimension of performance."

But how do we find innovation? How do we create innovation?

Tech Futures' approach is to help companies, service organizations, and schools reach outside their comfort zone.

Some of the best ways to innovate are to:

- study markets different than your own,
- look at who is not your customer, or
- investigate technology that you do not use.

Learning from the outside and applying what is different to your own organization is how innovation can start. That is what Tech Futures is about.

Innovation has a close connection to entrepreneurship. According to Joseph Schumpeter, an entrepreneur

Member organizations

1. PRIMUS
2. Textron Lycoming
3. Susquehanna Health
4. SEDA-COG
5. Ben Franklin Technology Partners
6. Discovery Machine, Inc
7. Stonefield Capital
8. Penn College
9. Lycoming College
10. Larson Design Group
11. City of Williamsport
12. M&T Bank
13. Williamsport-Lycoming Chamber of Commerce
14. Kolb Net Works
15. Penn TeleData
16. Williamsport-Lycoming Keystone Innovation Zone

neur is "a person who is willing and able to convert a new idea or invention into a successful innovation."

Entrepreneurship is the practice of starting new organizations, particularly new businesses, in response to newly identified opportunities.

Entrepreneurship, in turn, is closely connected to technology-driven economic development. We hope to realize such development in this region through growth of existing companies and the recruitment or creation of new companies to support and serve them.

In addition, we hope to conduct this technology economic development in the spirit of camaraderie: How can we help each other to be more successful?

Who should be interested in Tech Futures? Here are a few reasons you might become involved.

Your company wants to:

- Implement a second shift.
- Streamline the supply chain.
- Reach out to new customers.
- Find a customer base to serve.
- Explore avenues for new products and services.
- Seek advice on computerizing accounting.
- Seek ideas on how to make machines run more efficiently,
- Determine a different way of increasing revenue,
- Start and grow tech companies locally rather than working with companies out of state,
- Get a product to market faster and cheaper,
- Grow job opportunities for our work force,
- Share war stories, ideas and offer talent to the community
- Learn about state resources.

What is Tech Futures about? What makes us different?

In many ways, that is yet to be determined.

Innovation and entrepreneurship tend to play out in unexpected, exciting ways. Get involved and help to define the future of our region.

Remote control hunting

Lawmakers say trend must stop

By JIM SUHR
Associated Press Writer

Slouched at a computer, the "hunter" perks up as a 12-point buck eases into view on his screen. Maneuvering his mouse, he swivels the rifle and focuses the cross hairs. With a click of the mouse, the rifle fires a bullet, mortally wounding the animal.

Call it hunting by remote control. And though still more concept than trend, lawmakers in several states have set their sights on stopping the practice in its tracks.

Illinois state Rep. Dan Reitz has proposed banning such hunting in Illinois, saying such "ready, aim, click" kills, or the prospect of them, push the ethical envelope and violate the spirit of "fair chase" hunts.

"I just think it's wrong," Reitz said, adding that use of such technology — which features a webcam and a .22-caliber rifle atop a remote-controlled rig — would "give all sportsmen a black eye."

Technology that enables people to stalk online and kill real prey has alarmed hunters and lawmakers intent on preemptively blocking the practice. About two dozen states already have outlawed the method, which the Humane Society of the United States calls pay-per-view slaughter.

"The animal has no chance. There's no challenge



GARY HARPOLE

for you — except knowing how to use a computer and push a button," Arkansas state Sen. Ruth Whitaker said earlier this year while introducing a measure that calls for banning potential cyber hunting in her state. "You never left your tufted sofa. What's sportsmanlike about that?"

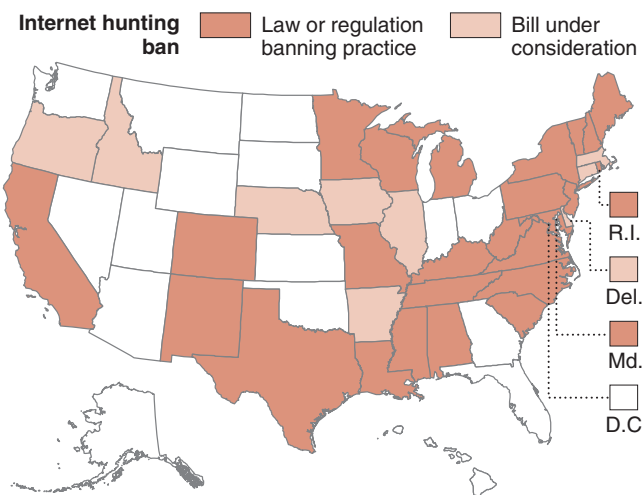
The issue emerged in early 2005, when Texas entrepreneur John Lockwood set up a Web site that allowed subscribing hunters with a high-speed connection to shoot antelope, wild pigs and other game on his 220-acre San Antonio spread via remote control — from anywhere. Lockwood offered to send the animals' heads to subscribers.

During a demonstration, a friend of Lockwood used a computer 45 miles away to shoot a wild hog as it fed at his ranch. But, according to news reports, he only wounded the animal. Lockwood, who was on site, finished the kill.

Lockwood's venture barely got started before Texas lawmakers swooped in and shot it down. Since then, other states have hustled to get

Online hunting banned in half of U.S.

The practice of stalking and killing prey via computer-assisted equipment, known as online hunting, has been banned in 25 states.



SOURCE: The Humane Society of the United States

something on their books barring the practice.

Even die-hard hunters are opposed, saying that shooting an animal via computer isn't sporting and doesn't require the element of fair chase in conventional hunting through forest, field or marsh. Some states have posed similar objections to "canned" hunting, during which big game is hunted in captivity as trophies.

"We believe sick ideas have a bad way of spreading, so want to make sure we nip this in the bud and ban it in all 50 states," Michael Markarian, executive vice president of the Humane Society, said of cyber hunting. The group also is pressing for a federal ban.

Pro-hunting groups including Safari Club International and the National Rifle Association also oppose remote-control hunting.

Gary Harpole, an Illinois

hunter who figures he's killed 100 deer, most with a bow, said such a practice "takes away from what hunting really is all about: getting outdoors, experiencing nature."

"To me, 90 percent of hunting is the experience, 10 percent is the harvest," said Harpole, who runs a hunter's lodge at his rural home. Bagging a buck by computer, he said, "is a lazy way of hunting."

But Lockwood has said the technology could help people with disabilities or perhaps servicemen overseas shoot game. And an attendant in the blind with the remote-control rifle can override any unsafe or unethical shots.

Reitz isn't swayed by such arguments.

"There's a lot of opportunities out there for people with disabilities," he said. "I just think this is a bad way to do it."

Computers readied for early daylight savings time

By BRIAN BERGSTEIN
AP Technology Writer

Normally the switch to daylight-saving time isn't a big deal, but today, Jeff Ronner has to put people on the case.

Ronner is a San Francisco-area field services manager for technology outsourcer Perot Systems Corp., and he handles computer systems for a big Perot client, Catholic Healthcare West. Last week he put the final touches on his plan to make certain that Catholic HealthCare's voice-mail systems and other networks recognize daylight time.

Those computers, like those of all but the most recent vintage, probably were programmed to believe that daylight-saving time begins the first Sunday in April and ends the final Sunday in October. Those rules, in place for two decades, were overturned by a 2005 U.S. law that extended daylight-saving time by three weeks in the spring and one week in the autumn.

This is nice for after-dinner strolls and might even save some energy (which was Congress' motive), but the computing industry had to scramble. Many people only recently realized the change would even impact computers.

"This has been a little bit of a sleeper issue," said Brian Mulford, chief technology officer at Regulus Group LLC, which handles payments and other transactions for large consumer companies.

Computing vendors developed and sent out patches that alter how software deals with daylight-saving time — which should cover most home PC users. Those who rely heavily on calendar programs should visit their software providers' Web sites for advice.

"The average person, John and Jane computer user, is unlikely to see much of a problem, if anything," said David Keller, founder of Compu-Doctor, a computer-help provider in Florida.

But in many complex networks with a range of newer and older equipment, on-the-

fly tweaks sometimes have been unavailable. That has forced systems engineers to study how various computing applications deal with time, and make manual fixes if necessary.

The process reminded some people of the planning for the widely feared Year 2000 bug, even if the effects of this glitch — computer time is an hour off — appear far less threatening.

"There's a lot to consider," Ronner said. "Something that seems as simple as turning a clock back has amazing and extensive implications in everything you touch here, because so many things are date- and time-stamped."

Some computer glitches may not show up until Monday, the first business day under the new schedule. Overall, however, computing experts don't expect major problems to erupt.