



Profiles of Technology
IN TENNESSEE

An Innovative Online Initiative has One East Tennessee Town Blazing a Trail Down the Road to Economic Development

Name:

Move to Kingsport

Internet:

www.movetokingsport.com

Products/Services:

Informational resources for those interested in moving to Kingsport

Location:

Kingsport/Sullivan County

Leadership:

Lee Fish, Director

Founded: 2006

Innovative Insight: *“We’re using the Web to go back to the fundamental basics of life – the human heart. When you hook somebody with the heart, you don’t lose them.”*

The Importance of

Broadband: *“I have to be equipped to talk to as many people as I can. Speed is necessary when responding to hundreds of inquiries. Speed is what sets you apart.”*

Impact of the Web site:

Between July 2006 and June 2007, more than 1,500 families from around the country moved to Kingsport

Kingsport, TN – The city of Kingsport is bringing the phrase “Southern hospitality” into the 21st century with the help of broadband technology.

Two years ago, the city’s Board of Mayor and Aldermen and the Chamber of Commerce joined forces to create the Move to Kingsport Council, an initiative designed to encourage people to move to the city in an effort to boost economic development and ensure that a skilled work force was in place for local industries to be successful in the future. The first item on the agenda was to create a website for the project, and that’s when MovetoKingsport.com was officially born.

The site went online in 2006, and almost immediately, requests for information about moving to Kingsport shot up. When Lee Fish was brought on board in July of 2007 as Director of the program, she further streamlined the city’s unique approach to recruiting newcomers by personally responding to every request she received. “We’re using the Web to go back to the fundamental basics of life – the human heart,” Lee says. “When you hook somebody with the heart, you don’t lose them.”

Her approach works. For the year 2006, the website received a little over 3,000 unique visitors. Since the beginning of 2007, that number has skyrocketed to nearly 23,000 unique visitors.

The response doesn’t surprise Lee. She says the creation of the website made a 100% difference in the response to the Move to Kingsport initiative. “The website is the basic catalyst for recruiting new residents. It is the first portal that the world sees of what your city has to offer.”

And since she spends a great deal of her time each day responding to e-mails, Lee says the ease of high-speed Internet is what makes her job manageable. “I have to be equipped to talk to as many people as I can. Speed is necessary when responding to hundreds of inquiries. Speed is what sets you apart.”

Now the #1 recognized source for information about relocation to Kingsport, the Move to Kingsport initiative shows no signs of slowing down. Between July 2006 and June 2007, more than 1,500 families from around the country moved to Kingsport.

“We are attempting to do something here in Kingsport that’s not ever been done that we know of,” says Fish. “We focus on making people feel like they are a human being and not a number in society.”

About TN 95:

Citizens across the state are using technology in innovative ways to ensure that Tennessee remains the place of choice to live, work and raise a family. Connected Tennessee is profiling businesses and Tennesseans in each of the state’s 95 counties to identify lessons learned on the path to successful innovation. For more information visit our Web site at www.connectedtn.org or call 615-242-9508.