

Marshall County Tribune

Back to the future: City holds tech fair

<http://www.marshalltribune.com/story/1542347.html>

BY Karen Hall
5/27/09

The first-ever Marshall County Technology Fair - held last Thursday at the Lewisburg campus of Columbia State - was pronounced a success by organizers, vendors and attendees.

Putting on the fair was one of the goals of the Three-Star Technology Committee. Its objective was to inform citizens, businesses, industries, parents and teachers about the advances in technology, products available, and how technology continues to enrich our lives.

"It was packed at lunch time," said Mike Wiles, executive director of the Joint Economic and Community Development Board. "We had a good turn out from 11 a.m. on; a constant stream of people. The Rotary and Kiwanis met here today, and the teachers came for a personal development day."

Wiles added that the school system and the school board had really turned out. He reported that Dr. Stan Curtis, director of schools, and his central office staff had paid a visit.

"Overall we've got good suggestions for next year," Wiles said. "Over 200 signed in, and we hope this will grow every year. There were a lot of good comments on the workshops. Now we've got to work on reaching the ones we didn't reach."

Among the exhibitors was the non-profit organization Connected Tennessee, which helps counties learn the advantages of broadband Internet. It also develops and implements effective strategies for technology deployment, use and literacy in Tennessee. Connected Tennessee is coordinating the Computers 4 Kids project with the state and the departments of human and children's services.

Over the next three years, at least 3,000 computers will be awarded to children, families and organizations in need across Tennessee.

Computer skills and Internet access have become essential to gaining access to educational resources in the global economy.

Other exhibitors at the tech fair addressed a variety of computer-related interests, from basics like Bank of America's on-line banking and Verizon's and AT&T's cellular phones that receive e-mail, to specific services like Licentia Design's web design for small business and Marshall County Internet Service's web hosting and set-up of domain names.

Licentia's Lena Wright gave a workshop of "Web Design for Small Business" and Fred Haley, co-owner of MCIS, talked on Basic E-mail and Basic Internet Safety.

In front of the Columbia State building MXN Corporation had their special bus parked. MXN provides networking solutions: routers, switches, firewalls, and much more, as well as doing training and sales. They worked closely with technology director Suzanne Ingram to design the network for the schools.

Ingram was also a presenter at one of the hour-long workshops went on from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. She discussed "Office on a Stick for Teachers and Parents", "Internet Safety for Teachers and Parents," and "Nettrekker, Brainpop, and Learn 360 for Parents, Teachers and Students." Debbie Crable, who teaches at Cornersville High School, spoke on T1180 calculator use, and school resource officers Shane Chapman and Eli Stuard discussed "Internet Safety Awareness for Parents."

There were also software workshops to help with programs like Paint Shop Pro, Excel Spreadsheet, and Power Point. Representatives from the Tennessee Electronic Library gave valuable information, and Debbie Hill, an independent CAbi consultant, discussed networking for small business, as well as exhibiting CAbi designer clothing and Silpada jewelry.