

BellSouth: Serving Our Rural Customers

Technology Deployment in Rural Areas

- BellSouth serves 24 million lines across the nine-state region. Approximately 40% of these lines are rural residential and business customers
- BellSouth's gross investment in rural markets has been more than \$19 billion (net \$6.7B after depreciation)
- Plan to invest approx. \$1.1 billion in rural areas this year and in 2000
- Today, 85% of our lines are digital and we will invest so that 100% of those lines are digital at the beginning of the new millenium. Last year we invested almost \$4 billion in our network.
- BellSouth is moving new technologies to rural areas. Along with phone lines being 100% digital, we are moving toward 100% digital switches in rural areas

New Facilities in Rural Areas

- BellSouth has made an investment in our people in underserved rural areas by locating four brand new customer service centers for National Directory Assistance Service in non-metro areas of our region.
- Locations are: Albany, Ga.; Paducah, Kent.; Greenville, Miss.; Orangeburg, S.C.
Total employment: 400 this year, 600 next.

BellSouth Support of Education

- Through edupower3 program, BellSouth is continuing its investment in integrating technology into public schools
- Every superintendent in our territory will be invited to be part of our leadership program that explains how to use technology – e.g. Internet access – in their classrooms.
- Also investing \$7M for individual teacher training

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BellSouth: Serving Our Rural Customers Telemedicine & Distance Learning Initiatives - Two Mississippi Success Stories

#1: Telemedicine in Tupelo

In America, **1 of every 100 babies** is born with a congenital heart defect. The care provided to those newborns by hospitals in their first few moments of life is crucial.

- **Hope for Rural Hospitals:** In caring for children with difficult conditions such as heart defects, rural hospitals are often at a disadvantage due to funding and staffing constraints. For example, the U.S.'s largest rural hospital –North Mississippi Women's Medical Center in Tupelo – has no pediatric cardiologists on staff.

However, BellSouth is working with the Tupelo hospital to provide the same level of care that an infant receives in an urban-based hospital.

- **Best of Both Worlds:** Through high-speed, high-bandwidth telecommunications networks, hometown Tupelo pediatricians can jointly care for children by instantly transmitting cardiogram, X-ray and other critical information hundreds of miles away to pediatric cardiologists at Le Bonheur Children's Medical Hospital in Memphis. Doctors in Tupelo and Memphis work together to do a real-time co-examination on their patients without subjecting infants to expensive and life-threatening helicopter or ambulance transportation. Parents also know instantly the diagnosis of their children via telemedicine. *Other telemedicine programs in Mississippi towns of Collins, Bay Springs, Waynesboro and the South Central Regional Medical Center in Laurel*

#2: Distance Learning in Jackson

Working with the superintendent of Jackson Public Schools (JPS), BellSouth has created a high-speed ATM network for transporting voice, video and data to service Jackson's 58 schools, 2,200 teachers and administrators and 32,000 students. **BellSouth's learning connection has had a dramatic effect on the school district's ability to educate.**

- **Teacher shortage:** JPS can make use of master teachers, such as award-winning science teacher Peggy Carlisle at Poindexter Elementary, to fill gaps elsewhere in the school district. Peggy can teach kids through distance learning high-speed video transmission that BellSouth is providing. Similarly, Mrs. Martin, who teaches Spanish at Murrah High can also teach Spanish to students at Blackburn Middle School, which doesn't have a Spanish teacher.

Mississippi Success Stories Continued

- **Parental Involvement in Schools:** Increased access to schools and teachers for parents is critical in staying involved with the school and their child. Through advanced connections parents have access to teachers via voice mail and e-mail. **Parents also have 24-hour access to teacher web sites to monitor homework assignments, for example.** A workshop for parents was recently provided at the computer lab at the McWillie JPS, Professional Development Center. Parents were able to search the Web for scholarship information.
- **Financial Accountability:** JPS is now using centralized access to a new financial accounting system. Installation to all 66 sites (58 schools, 8 administrative offices) will be completed in July 1999
- **Security:** Kids can't learn in an unsafe environment. BellSouth is providing technology to aid school security through video surveillance of remote sites; centralized single point monitoring and integration of systems to alarms.
- **Student Achievement:** Advanced network services are being used as model teachers around the country work together to access, employ and create thematic learning units tied to critical curriculum standards. Also, students are able to construct their own knowledge by searching the web, talking to experts and collaborating with peers to complete project-oriented assignments. JPS is also sending students for network certification and has put in place 4 networking courses that make up the Cisco Academy at Murrah High School.