

Teletern program helps community development

Students find internships and job opportunities with company

by John Hill
STAFF WRITER

The Minnesota Internet Center is part of a state-sponsored initiative to assist Minnesota communities in community development, economic development, health care and education.

The initiative, which was passed last year, calls for funding of \$500,000.

Half of this money will go to communities in the form of grants while the other half will be used to maintain web sites and on-line services.

The Teletern program comes from this initiative.

The Teletern program is being conducted by John Hamerlinck, planner for the Minnesota Office of Technology.

The Teletern program needs student interns (teleterns) who have an interest in community development areas such as economic development, community organizing, local government and human services.

"We are looking for students with wide ranges of interests that are not limited to this list," Hamerlinck said. "Students who are interested in how communities develop and are

interested in working in many different areas of technology are encouraged to apply."

With the information age upon us, communities are in need of educated people in technology to aid in development.

"We are hoping to place at least one teletern with each community that receives a grant," Hamerlinck said.

At least six teleterns are needed for fall semester.

"Technical expertise is not extremely important because the first two weeks of the internship are dedicated to seminars that enhance intern's skills and show strategies that work in a given community," Hamerlinck said. "Interns will gain knowledge in a specific project they will work on."

The reason for this program is telecommunicating is becoming an easy and cost-effective way of conducting business.

This program involves conducting inventory within the community to see how the interns can leverage resources so all sectors can cooperate.

"This is something people need, like sewer and water. It is no longer a service you can get from the phone company. It is needed," Hamerlinck said.

The teleterns will be going into communities and showing them resources and models that work best and how their present situation can be improved through enhanced technologies.

"Telecommunicating infrastructure will be a must so people can work in another region without being physically present," Hamerlinck explained. "Companies will save money through not having to send employees elsewhere to conduct business. It can be done in their hometown."

Teleterns are paid the same way work study students are.

"We want the internships to help the intern gain knowledge and substantive experience," Hamerlinck said.

Interns must have six credits, and the internship will begin next fall.

Students who are interested should apply as soon as possible.

"The earlier they apply, the better chance we have of matching these students up geographically and matching their expertise to needs in communities," Hamerlinck said.

Students can call John Hamerlinck at 654-5225 or by e-mail at jhamerlinck@stcloudstate.edu. The Minnesota Office of Technology's web site is www.to.state.mn.us.