

Redwood Technology Consortium Business Plan

March, 2006



Plan Development Funded by Humboldt County Headwaters Fund

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Executive Summary

The Redwood Technology Consortium (RTC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit public benefit corporation organized to serve as the primary information and educational resource on issues related to the technology industry on California's North Coast. It was founded in 1997 by a small group of individuals interested in technology and has grown to in less than 10 years to more than 125 members in all types of businesses and organizations. RTC is considered to be synonymous with the Information & Technology (IT) cluster in the *Prosperity! North Coast Strategy* economic development plan of Humboldt County, CA.

RTC has become the 'go-to' place for information about telecommunications and technology-based economic development. It also provides opportunities for socializing, educating, and networking through monthly meetings and events. The organization has forged strong community partnerships and continues to find ways to create collaborative alliances.

RTC believes that an improved economy and quality of life can be gained through technology and telecommunications. All businesses use technology and telecommunications to support their business processes. IT is not only a cluster, but provides services within all other businesses.

RTC has the competencies to be a stronger leader in the community. The current RTC board members are professionals who own or work in tech-based businesses, economic development, and education. Many RTC members are tech-based business owners or employed by organizations that are dependant upon technology to conduct their business. RTC also has a strong cadre of members who are savvy in the managerial aspects of businesses and organizations. As an organization, RTC functions on a professional level with a 'get-it-done-now' business sensibility. Because of this expertise and the history of developing the IT cluster, RTC can assist other clusters in their organizational development.

RTC reached an organizational crossroads in 2004. There was no staff, and the board came to the conclusion that the organization was not sustainable in its current form. The all-volunteer board was doing most of the "heavy lifting". In partnership with the North Coast Small Business Development Center (SBDC), a VISTA, Rhonda Wiedenbeck, was hired to help develop an RTC business plan. A Headwaters Grant to benchmark similar tech organizations in other regions augmented this effort. This report is the culmination of the strategic planning sessions, survey of members, and visits to other regions, notably Blacksburg (VA), Davis (CA), Nevada County (CA), and Ashland (OR).

The following report is the RTC Strategic Framework and business plan and covers the years 2006-2008. These are working documents which address strategic initiatives as well as a marketing plan to increase revenue, thus increasing capacity to fund initiatives. This framework will be reviewed by board members yearly to continue to meet the needs of the organization and our region.

Summary of the RTC Strategic Framework: 2006-2008

Mission

The mission of the RTC is to diversify and strengthen the economy and quality of life on the North Coast by enhancing the technological capabilities of our region through advocacy, outreach, and education.

Vision

RTC will drive regional prosperity by leveraging technology to:

- collaborate as an active partner in creating a sustainable, growing economy;
- partner with educational institutions and businesses to increase the knowledge base and the capacity of our local workforce;
- ensure that telecommunications are robust, accessible, affordable, and ubiquitous;
- promote effective use of technology in local businesses
- convene common interests and create a socially and physically networked community that is a magnet for high tech start ups and high tech collaborations.

To accomplish the organizational mission and vision, RTC has identified the following strategic goals for 2006-2008:

- 1) Address Critical Technology Issues for Enhancement of Humboldt County Economy**
- 2) Conduct Organized and Targeted Outreach and Education**

To facilitate the accomplishment of the RTC strategic goals, the organization will need to focus on the following tactical goals:

- 1. Increase Overall Income for Organization**
- 2. Develop Organizational Capacity with Staff and Efficient Operations**
- 3. Cultivate new Leaders within the Organization for Leadership Roles**

The framework was reviewed by and approved by the RTC Board on 3/9/2006. It will be evaluated continuously and is meant to be a working document that evolves as the work of RTC progresses.

RTC Strategic Framework: 2006-2008

Mission

The mission of the RTC is to diversify and strengthen the economy and quality of life on the North Coast by enhancing the technological capabilities of our region through advocacy, outreach, and education.

Vision

RTC will drive regional prosperity by leveraging technology to:

- collaborate as an active partner in creating a sustainable, growing economy;
- partner with educational institutions and businesses to increase the knowledge base and the capacity of our local workforce;
- ensure that telecommunications are robust, accessible, affordable, and ubiquitous;
- promote effective use of technology in local businesses.
- convene common interests and create a socially and physically networked community that is a magnet for high tech start ups and high tech collaborations.

To accomplish the organizational mission and vision, RTC has identified the following strategic goals for 2006-2008:

Strategic Goals

1) Address Critical Technology Issues for Enhancement of Humboldt County Economy

Projects	Priority	When
A. Focus on redundancy in local telecommunications	High	Current
B. Expand broadband coverage to unserved areas	High	Current
C. Create a Humboldt County Telecommunications strategic planning committee	High	2006
D. Research and report the viability of municipal broadband to communities that are considering it	Medium	Current
E. Increase the tech knowledge of workforce	Medium	Ongoing

2) Conduct Organized and Targeted Outreach and Education

Projects	Priority	When
A. Convene forums and educational events to inform the community, leaders, and elected officials about important technology issues	High	Current
B. Provide informative and educational general membership meetings that also allow opportunities for networking and informal sharing	Medium	Ongoing
C. Provide expertise to local jurisdictions and economic development organizations	High	Ongoing
D. Unify the region by reaching out to Southern and Eastern Humboldt county residents	Medium	Ongoing
E. Reach out to youth of the region by providing opportunities for future jobs and professional development	Medium	Ongoing/ 2008
F. Promote the effective use of technology in local businesses and other organizations	Medium	2007
G. Unify the tech sector, beyond computer-centric and tech services-centric companies	Low	2008
H. Conduct outreach and provide assistance to other clusters	Low	As requested

To facilitate the accomplishment of the RTC strategic goals, the organization will need to focus on the following tactical goals:

Tactical Goals

A. Increase Overall Income for Organization

Projects	Priority	When
A. Increase Memberships – Develop a membership campaign	High	Fall 2006
B. Cultivate Sponsors – Develop a sponsorship campaign	High	Summer 2006
C. Reduce Attrition	Medium	Ongoing
D. Identify Other Avenues for Income	Medium	2007
E. Develop Financial Plan	High	Current

B. Develop Organizational Capacity with Permanent Staff and Efficient Operations

Projects	Priority	When
A. Evaluate Staffing requirements	High	2006
B. Effectively utilize and manage volunteers	High	2007
C. Determine if RTC requires a physical location with office, staff and phone	Medium	2007
D. Determine if RTC should change its non-profit status from 501(c)3 to 501(c)6 (a trade association)	Medium	2007-2008

C. Cultivate new Leaders within organization for Leadership Roles

Projects	Priority	When
A. Keep the quality high – Encourage the best people to be on the RTC Board of Directors.	High	Now
B. Increase the involvement of the general membership	High	Now
C. Consider special positions that develop youth for leadership roles in the RTC and the larger community	Low	2007

RTC Work Plan

Strategic Goals

1) Address Critical Technology Issues for Enhancement of Humboldt County Economy

Project	Tasks
A) Focus on redundancy in local telecommunications <i>High priority-Current</i>	1) Participate in a business analysis for feasibility of building redundant fiber
	2) Identify key anchor tenants or companies at high risk without redundant fiber
	3) Hold a forum to present findings from a business case
	4) Plan for follow up on chosen ownership, financing, and operational models

Project	Tasks
B) Expand broadband coverage to unserved areas <i>High priority-Current</i>	1) Identify unserved areas with high demand for broadband
	2) Facilitate connecting these unserved areas with vendors or telecom providers
	3) Participate in Orick CDBG wireless planning project with County of Humboldt
	4) Plan for follow up on chosen ownership, financing, and operational models

Project	Tasks
C) Creation of a Humboldt County Telecommunications Strategic Planning Committee <i>High priority-2006</i>	1) Spearhead organization of committee representing all parts of the county to educate city and county elected officials and advise on regional telecom and technology planning
	2) Assist in formation of committee
	3) Provide knowledge gleaned from interviewing groups in other regions
	4) Inform about opportunities identified in the "Living in a Networked World" report
	5) Educate committee about the 'Community Operating System' concept developed by Southern Oregon Telecommunications and Technology Council (SOTTC)

Strategic Goals continued

Project	Tasks
D) Research and report about the viability of regional broadband <i>Med. Priority-Current</i>	1) Provide communities desirous of community WiFi with resources and references
	2) Educate communities about what municipal broadband can and cannot do, support needed, pitfalls, and regulatory issues

Project	Tasks
E) Increase tech knowledge of workforce <i>Med. Priority-Ongoing/2007</i>	1) Partner with the Workforce Investment Board
	2) Conduct Gap Analysis – what do current employers want? What would relocating businesses want? What is our workforce capable of now? In the future? How do we develop a technology savvy workforce?
	3) Create links to technology educational resources and partners in the region
	4) Inventory tech skills and tech companies in region

2) Conduct Organized and Targeted Outreach and Education

Project	Tasks
A) Convene forums and educational events to inform the community, leaders and elected officials about important technology issues <i>High priority-current</i>	1) Offer workshops similar to ‘Untangling the Wires: Broadband 101’ (Virginia project)
	2) Conduct survey – asking “What do people want to know?”
	3) Create education committee that is looking out for timely education topics
	4) Provide educational resources on the RTC website
	5) Develop road show for RTC marketing and branding and speak to local organizations

Project	Tasks
B) Provide informative and educational general membership meetings that also allow opportunities for networking and informal sharing <i>Med. Priority-Ongoing</i>	1) Allow ‘Birds of a Feather’ time after meeting for people to discuss technology topics that they are interested in
	2) Plan more social events for informal networking
	3) Continue to ask members what they would like to learn about at general meetings

Strategic Goals continued

Project	Tasks
C) Provide expertise to local jurisdictions and Economic Development Organizations <i>Med. Priority-Ongoing</i>	1) Continued education of local governmental and community leaders about the importance of technology and ubiquitous broadband for economic sustainability of the region
	2) Advocate for a technology and telecommunications element in all general plans in Humboldt County
	3) Provide general plan telecommunications element (template) for local general plans (taken from Living in a Networked World report)

Project	Tasks
D) Unify the region by reaching out to Southern and Eastern Humboldt county residents <i>Med. Priority-Ongoing</i>	1) Conduct field trips, special events, and/or general meetings in outlying areas
	2) Extend personal invitations for residents of outlying areas to participate in Eureka area events
	3) Hold special meetings at different times to include people not available at the regular monthly meeting times
	4) Include a special section on the RTC website for outlying regions to describe their unique situations and challenges regarding technology

Project	Tasks
E) Reach out to youth of the region by providing opportunities for future jobs and professional development <i>Med. Priority-Ongoing/2008</i>	1) Effectively promote the RTC scholarship – it is an underutilized outreach tool for RTC
	2) Encourage and provide opportunities for students to participate in RTC
	3) Consider development of a mentoring program for students and RTC business members
	4) Actively Support EAST programs in local schools (reserve time annually at a monthly meeting for them to present their top projects), participate in EAST yearly showcase

Project	Tasks
F) Promote the effective use of technology in local businesses and other organizations <i>Med. Priority-2007</i>	1) Continue to write and publish Tech Beat articles
	2) Continue monthly meetings
	3) Provide business focused tips and education on RTC website

Strategic Goals continued

Project	Tasks
G) Unify the tech sector, beyond computer-centric and tech services-centric companies <i>Low. Priority-2008</i>	1) Determine which business sectors and “alternative” technology-based businesses are part of outreach plan
	2) Convene special meetings & forums. Reach out to and include in other forums

Project	Tasks
H) Conduct Outreach and Provide Assistance to other Clusters <i>Low. Priority-As requested</i>	1) Develop plan for Cluster outreach
	2) Interview other cluster leaders and find out their technology needs
	3) Invite cluster leaders to educational events and tell them why it might benefit them to be there

Tactical Goals

1) Increase Overall Income for Organization

Project	Tasks
A) Increase Memberships - Develop a membership marketing campaign <i>High Priority- Fall 2006</i>	1) Determine how many members and by when
	2) Determine the target market and how RTC can reach them
	3) Determine the vehicle(s) to reach them
	4) Develop a compelling case statement that clearly demonstrates the value of being an RTC member
	5) Welcome new people at RTC meetings
	6) Target people that are new to the region – on website, tell them why they should be a part of RTC

Project	Tasks
B) Cultivate Sponsors – Develop a sponsorship campaign <i>High Priority- Summer 2006</i>	1. Identify potential sponsor organizations, including businesses, telecom companies, and jurisdictions
	2. Create short list - Focusing on the ‘power brokers’ and ‘large users of telecommunications’ in region
	3. Develop case statement of why it is important for them to support the efforts of RTC
	4. Determine the vehicle(s) to reach them
	5. Highlight RTC sponsors on website & invite others to join

Project	Tasks
C) Reduce Attrition – Develop a plan for retaining members <i>Medium Priority- Ongoing</i>	1) Preventive - Provide a venue for members to voice dissatisfaction or concern and following up (RTC doesn't have to fix everything, but listening is important)
	2) Follow up - When members decline to renew memberships contact them and ask why. Look for ways to make easy fixes
	3) Periodically survey members about organization

Project	Tasks
D) Identify Other Avenues for Income <i>Medium Priority- 2007</i>	1) Create a fundraiser event (e.g. Crab Feed, ‘Wired’ Coffee Brew-Off), can be tied in with membership drive
	2) Research Fee-for-Services work (this could include contract work with SBDC, County, and cities)
	3) Identify potential grant funded projects
	4) Convene forums and educational events (with free or reduced rates for RTC members)

Tactical Goals continued

Project	Tasks
E) Develop Financial Plan <i>High Priority - current</i>	1) Develop detailed budget annually
	2) Track budget monthly and annually

2) Develop Organizational Capacity with Staff and Efficient Operations

Project	Tasks
A) Evaluate Staffing requirements <i>High Priority- 2006</i>	1) Determine whether an executive director (ED) is needed, whether full- or part-time; determine whether position will be an employee or contractor
	2) If ED is needed, determine qualifications, compensation & a recruitment plan
	3) Determine whether other professional service or additional staffing is needed after periodic evaluation of staffing needs and funding

Project	Tasks
B) Effectively utilize and manage volunteers (includes committees) <i>High Priority- 2007</i>	1) Develop a volunteer/committee handbook
	2) Determine what types of projects/tasks are best suited for volunteers and what should be the responsibility of the staff (create guidelines or policy regarding this)
	3) Regularly follow-up and provide support for work done by volunteers
	4) Publicly and personally recognize the efforts and contributions of volunteers (annually at a minimum)
	5) Evaluate the efficacy of volunteers/committees and make changes as necessary

Project	Tasks
C) Determine if RTC requires a physical location with office, staff and phone <i>Medium Priority- 2007</i>	1. Determine needs and best locations – consider that another organization may be willing to host RTC for reduced rent and use of office equipment (an ideal situation would be within the Prosperity Center)
	2. Determine and identify funds needed to support an office

Tactical Goals continued

Project	Tasks
D) Determine if RTC should change its non-profit status from 501(c)3 to 501(c)6 (a trade association) <i>Medium Priority- 2007-2008</i>	1) Evaluate whether or not this is the best fit for RTC
	2) Allow the membership to participate in discussion and talk to board members at the time 501(c)3 status application
	3) Obtain professional services of an attorney, if needed

3) Cultivate new Leaders within organization for Leadership Roles

Project	Tasks
A) Keep the quality high - Encourage the best people to be on the RTC board of Directors <i>High Priority- Now</i>	1. Shift board function from one in which board does all the day-to-day work to one in which the board is focusing on governance, vision, as well as cultivating and maintaining strategic relationships
	2. Cultivate positive impressions about the work and influence of the RTC Board Members
	3. Determine target board members and how they can be reached

Project	Tasks
B) Increase the involvement of the general membership <i>High Priority- Now</i>	1) Encourage participation in committees and other volunteer positions as prerequisite for board nomination
	2) Encourage participation in surveys and questionnaires for future planning
	3) Encourage the use of RTC website

Project	Tasks
C) Consider special positions that develop youth for leadership roles in RTC and the larger community <i>Low Priority - 2007</i>	1) Interview teachers from the local EAST programs about ways RTC can include youth
	2) Develop plan based on teacher feedback
	3) Interview RTC business owners about interest in youth mentoring

RTC Marketing Plan

Consumers of RTC include:

- Organizations that depend on technology/telecommunications
- Community leaders interested in economic development and how technology and telecommunications can be a vehicle for an improved economy
- Small businesses looking for ways to network with others and market their product
- Individuals interested in community development and/or technology

Reasons why people want to join RTC include:

- Opportunities to network with other like-minded individuals
- Wanting to support the advocacy efforts of RTC
- Educational opportunities
- Marketing opportunities

RTC will reach new members by:

- Writing weekly Tech Beat articles that educate about effective uses of technology in three local newspapers
- Maintaining a website with interesting and useful content
- Public Service Announcements in local media about monthly meetings and other events
- Welcoming new people attending meetings
- Asking individuals and organizations to join and participate
- Make it easy for people to sign-up and become members
- Development and implementation of a marketing plan; plan review by a professional marketing organization

RTC will maintain current membership by:

- Providing opportunities for members to market their products and services
- Cultivating relationships with organizations/people that provide high level of benefit to RTC (organizationally, financially, & politically)
- Recognizing and informing members what has been accomplished by the organization because of their support
- Asking for member input on important issues and ways RTC could best serve them
- Providing organized and effective ways for members to network and collaborate (birds of a feather)
- Advocate for causes that improve the economic climate

Building the RTC financially through increased membership (individuals) and sponsorship (businesses and organizations) revenues will be a key element to the successful execution of the organizational vision. The majority of marketing efforts by RTC the first year will be on building the membership. Other avenues for income will be identified and explored. **Figure 1** is the 2007 proposed membership structure. In a recent (Fall 2005) RTC survey, a number of business members indicated that they were willing to pay higher membership dues. In total, more than \$6,000 in extra income was committed by potential sponsors. With an organized outreach effort, RTC is optimistic of meeting membership revenue goals of \$11,000 next year. **Figure 2** outlines the organizations that RTC has identified as key stakeholders, the perceived status of the relationships, and notes about why the subset are important to RTC for the first outreach phase. The membership/sponsorship campaigns begin in Fall 2006.

2007 Proposed Membership Structure

Recognition	\$20	\$60	\$80	\$140	\$250	\$500	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$10,000
Promotion in RTC Marketing Materials										
2007 Membership Statement Stuffer										
Forum Participant										
Forum Sponsor										
Tech Directory Ads *							Third Page	Half Page	Full Page	Full Page
Year-round RTC Meeting Recognition										
Scholarship/ Education (20%)						\$100	\$200	\$500	\$1,000	\$2,000
Website Sponsor										
Publication in RTC Tech Directory										
Forum Attendee										
Tech Beat Article										
On RTC E-Mail List										
	Student / Senior	Individual	Non-profit	Business	Copper Sponsor	Silicon Sponsor	Bronze Sponsor	Silver Sponsor	Gold Sponsor	Platinum Sponsor

* Tech Directory ads may be purchased separately by any member at these rates:

Ads	1/3 page	1/2 page	full page
Member (renewal)	\$50.00	\$65.00	\$115.00
Member (new ad)	\$60.00	\$75.00	\$125.00
Non-member	\$75.00	\$90.00	\$140.00

Figure 1

RTC Relationships

<i>Maintain</i> <i>(Satisfied with current status of relationship)</i>	<i>Improve</i> <i>(have relationship, need to build)</i>
Eureka Reporter RAIN CENIC RREDC HCOE-HROP RCRA (Redwood Coast Rural Action) SBDC CR Cox/Cebridge Prosperity! Network Information and Technology Cluster Rep. Mike Thompson AEDC Sen. Wes Chesbro	Times Standard HAF & Institute of the Northcoast Verizon County Economic Development County Board of Supervisors
<i>Expand</i> <i>(Established relationship, but want to expand)</i>	<i>Grow</i> <i>(New/developing relationships)</i>
Northcoast Journal KHUM KHSU KMUD WIB E.A.S.T. Labs HSU CIS Club HSU Econ Dev. Andrew Cohill SBC/AT&T PG&E City Managers Redevelopment Agencies Virginia Tech SOTTIC (Southern Oregon Telecommunications and Technology Council) Special Districts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McKinleyville • Humboldt Hill • Cutten • Humboldt Community Service District Chambers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eureka • Arcata • Fortuna • Garberville • Rio Dell-Scotia Clusters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturing • Arts & Culture • Education and Research 	Karuk Tribe Hoopa Tribe Yurok Tribe Seniors Rural Residents Youth NorCAN Chambers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Lake • Orick • Ferndale • Trinidad • Willow Creek • McKinleyville Organization of City Chambers St. Joseph's Hospital Mad River Community Hospital Clinics United Indian Health Services Realtors North Bay Technology Round Table Convention & Visitors Bureau SARTA (Sacramento Area Regional Technology Association) DCN (Davis Community Network) Frontier Starstream 101Netlink Cell phone vendors Emergency services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dan Larkin • VOAD Clusters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dairy & Dairy Processing • Specialty Ag & Horticulture • Lumber & Wood Products • Tourism • Fisheries, Processing, & Aquaculture

Figure 2.1

RTC Targeted Outreach

Telcos/Utilities

SBC/AT&T

More active participation
Continued Funding

COX/Cebridge

More participation
Possible Funding source

Verizon

Get them to visit us
Funding/tiered membership

Frontier

Funding/tiered membership

Starstream

Funding/tiered membership

101Netlink

Membership

Cell phone vendors

Funding/tiered membership

PG&E

Funding
Right-of-way
Tiered Membership
Broadband over power lines

E.A.S.T. Labs

(Environmental and Spatial Technologies)

- Membership status and deliverables need to be clearly defined
- RTC as a vehicle to showcase program and projects

- Partnering in funding & grants
- We need to frame our relationship with them better

WIB

- Tiered Membership
- Employment Training Panel (ETP) funds (1-on-1 tech help for biz)
- RTC needs to be on the agenda to give presentations

Tribes

- Harold Horne (UIHS)
- Karuk & Hoopa came to community assessment
- Funding - Primed for project partnering
- Tribes are keeping their libraries open in East county
- Potential Telemedicine/Grant partnership opportunities
- Dial-tone is an issue (esp. upriver folks)
- Learn more about contracting with sovereign entities –different considerations
- Tiered membership
- Outreach with RTC road show

AEDC/RREDC

- Tiered membership
- Funding-programs for biz (part of our member services??)
- Links on RTC website

Figure 2.2

RTC Targeted Outreach Continued

HAF & Institute of the Northcoast

- Tiered membership (Institute supports Economic Development in region)
- RTC as a resource to be used when needed
- RTC's message to HAF should be "RTC is helping all the clusters and is serving local industries"

Elected Officials

Federal

- Mike Thompson has been instrumental with the tribes, Buckhorn summit (Hwy 299)
- He is the go to person for FCC, USDA Grants, and ROW concerns

State

- RCRA connections

County

- RTC roll in cable refranchising
- Talk to Kirk and Jacqueline

Cities

- Redevelopment Agencies
- City managers are the key to Cities

Special Districts

- McKinleyville, Garberville, Cutten, Humboldt Hill, etc.
- Humboldt Community Service District
- CSD – municipal bandwidth

Emergency Services

- \$\$\$ - Homeland security
- Detailed emergency services plan – Dan Larkin
- Radio interoperability
- VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters)

Health

- Partner in Tele-health and –medicine (hospitals/clinics are good project partners)
- Redundancy is an important issue for Tele-health
- Tiered membership
- Check out Humboldt/Del Norte Foundation for medical care (possible foot in the door?)
- Continuing education opportunities for health professionals at Tech Expo?
- Refer to Tina's list – Jeff Newman
- Be careful when talking about telemedicine. The myth is that it will bring in outside competition forcing local practitioners out. Truth: distributing existing medical resources using technology

Figure 2.2 (continued)

Organizational Structure

RTC conducted site visits and interviews of four regional technology associations to learn what they did and how they were organized. Much knowledge was gained and new relationships were created. Also, certain RTC practices were reinforced like the need to build and maintain strong relationships with stakeholders; and continued education of elected officials, community members and businesses. RTC later held a focus group to share ideas and discuss the organizational structures. The focus group agreed that RTC is most like the Southern Oregon Telecommunication and Technology Council (SOTTC) and a significant realization was that RTC, like SOTTC, is probably more like a trade association (501 (c) 6) than a public benefit organization (501 (c) 3). Table 3 is a comparison matrix of the technology associations that were visited. Table 4 is a comparison of IRS non-profit designations.

Also discussed was whether RTC needs to choose between being a member-focused organization or an advocacy focused organization. The board agreed that both roles were important for RTC and that the organization could focus on both aspects (and has been for many years).

Staffing and Volunteers

RTC took a big step and hired a contractor in January 2006, to perform basic administrative tasks. This has freed up time for overburdened board members, allowing them to focus on governance and building relationships. As the business plan is implemented more human resources will be needed to do the day to day work. The organization will need to evaluate whether an executive director will be needed and whether it will be a staff position or contract. As the organization grows, more staffing and an office space may be needed.

Volunteers have been the backbone of RTC thus far. The organization plans to continue to utilize volunteers but to do so in a more organized and staff supported way. A volunteer management plan and volunteer guidelines will be created as well as regular public recognition of their efforts. Also, there will be regular communication between board members, RTC staff, and volunteers.

Financial Plan

RTC is financially a simple organization. Overhead is very low since the organization does not have employees or a physical location. The RTC budget is detailed in Table 3 and budget narrative is in Table 4. As membership revenues increase, RTC will build capacity to do more and grow. If revenues do not meet the projected goals, RTC will scale back on initiatives and contracted help.

Table 1. Comparison of four Regional Technology Associations

Regional Technology Associations Matrix

	Sacramento Area Regional Technology Association (SARTA) http://www.sarta.org	Davis Community Network (DCN) http://www2.dcn.org/davis/orgs/DCN	Southern Oregon Telecommunications and Technology Council (SOTTC) http://www.sottc.org/	Nevada County Economic Resource Council –Telecom Team http://www.ncerc.org/
Staff	1: FT ED	1: PT ED	1: PT ED (contract, 10-20 hrs/wk)	volunteer committee members
Board	40-42 Biz leaders, CEOs, Angel investors, education	13: some very active in committees; working board	19: Active board of biz, gov, & ed leaders in region; working board	30 members
Non-profit designation	501 (c)3	501 (c)3	501 (c)6 (Trade Association)	501 (c)3
Membership structure	Graduated corporate & non profit memberships (\$1K-\$25 K); Individual (\$275)	Subscribe to network services, free to non profits	Individual - Free Sponsors \$50-\$2,500	Government and business
Benefits of Membership	Biz mentoring program; promotional marketing; event discounts, articles in newsletter.	Sponsored projects for selected local non-profits (application process)	Get one vote; opportunity to participate in working groups, promotional marketing, invitation to annual tech awards VIP event	N/A
Income Generation	Memberships; licensing the Tech Index; advertisement; fundraising events	Operations are paid for by the community and other orgs (portion of budget comes from the city of Davis); grant funds are for special projects; also portion of ISP profits	Sponsorships	Sponsorships and Grant funded projects
Mission/Focus	Provide access to capital, education, and business development	Education of community	Advocacy for increased connectivity and bandwidth; support new communications technology; community & biz education.	Economic Development, broadband deployment, & GIS mapping of broadband
Client/customers	Tech & biotech start-ups	Entire community, especially those not connected; non-profits	Businesses (esp. tech-based); general community	Businesses and residents

Table 1 continued

Regional Technology Associations Matrix, Continued

	Sacramento Area Regional Technology Association (SARTA) http://www.sarta.org	Davis Community Network (DCN) http://www2.dcn.org/davis/orgs/DCN	Southern Oregon Telecommunications and Technology Council (SOTTC) http://www.sottc.org/	Nevada County Economic Resource Council –Telecom. Team http://www.ncerc.org/
Marketing & Events	Monthly newsletter w/ local and national tech news articles; Tech Index Award luncheon (500 folks); BBQ & Texas Hold'em Poker (fundraiser); Power Surge (pure socializing event) Other small events include CEO roundtable & Small training panels Business relocations		Josephine County Fair Tech Pavilion & VIP event T.V. interviews 2x/month	Business Relocator has broadband coverage maps & other tech information
Projects	Tech Index: a barometer of how tech companies in the 9 county greater Sacramento region are performing	Community education workshops; web posting of election night returns; ad hoc projects led by some board members; ISP partnership	Ashland Fiber Network (AFN); community tech plans;	Taking about a builders/construction education forum; building out tech infrastructure
Level of community support/interest	Appears that group is a who's who of tech biz leaders in region. Not sure if general public knows much about them.	Appears like it is well supported in community and some committees are very active with dedicated volunteers	Well regarded organization among biz folks; AFN is controversial in community	Unclear
Other comments	Organization feels more like a trade association for high end tech businesses	Informal, laid-back, but productive organization. Some committees take on a life of their own where volunteers don't even realize who the parent organization is!	Two people seem to do the majority of the heavy lifting. They believe that competition has been good for the region and organization.	This group found that threatening to provide tech infrastructure in areas that didn't have coverage encouraged telecom service providers to get it in before they did.

Table 2

Comparison of IRS Non Profit Designation and RTC

IRS Code	Description of Organization	General Nature of Activities	Political Activity	Purposes Served	Donations -Deductible?
501 (c) 3	Religious, educational purposes, charitable, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, etc.	Activities of nature implied by description of class of organization	Absolute prohibition against political activity	Must serve public purposes	Yes - donations are deductible as charitable contributions by donors on their tax returns
501 (c) 4	Civic leagues (e.g. PTA, League of Women Voters), social welfare organizations, and local associations of employees	Promotion of community welfare, charitable, educational or recreational	Political activity permitted, but taxed	Can serve community purposes, can be somewhat narrower than (c) 3	No - donations are not deductible as charitable contributions. Businesses sometimes deduct as advertising
501 (c) 6	Chambers of commerce, trade boards, real estate boards, and other types of business leagues	They are characterized by a common business interest, which the organization typically promotes	Limited political activity permitted, but taxed. Activities must inform, educate, and promote their given interest.	Can serve the business purposes of the members	No - donations are not deductible as charitable contributions. Businesses sometimes deduct as advertising; dues may be deductible as business expense
Redwood Technology Consortium	A collection of business owners, education & governmental employees, and private citizens.	Activities are to inform, educate, and to promote the use of technology among businesses and citizenry	RTC would like to have a more prominent role in advocacy	Primarily serves business purposes, and secondarily serves community purposes.	Some people seem to donate (become members) and don't appear to be concerned about deductions, a few others want the deductions. RTC may want to get clarity on this by asking members

Table 3. Three year RTC budget.

2006-2008 RTC Budget

Revenue	2006	2007	2008
Annual Dues	5,815.00	5,000.00	6,000.00
Sponsorships	0.00	6,000.00	10,000.00
Community Grants & gifts	9,000.00		
Tech Directory Ads	1,465.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Other Projects	0.00		
Total Revenues	16,280.00	12,000.00	17,000.00
Expenditures			
Contractor fees	6,000.00	6,000.00	10,000.00
Bank Services Charges			
Dues & Subscriptions	100.00	100.00	100.00
Other Projects			
Meeting Supplies	500.00	500.00	500.00
Postage	30.00	30.00	30.00
Scholarship	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Travel	4,357.00		
Printing & Reproduction	1,500.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Professional Fees	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Rent	481.00	481.00	481.00
Advertising/Marketing	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
Web Hosting	200.00	200.00	200.00
Non-profit Filing Fee	20.00	20.00	20.00
Miscellaneous	400.00	400.00	400.00
Total Expenditures	17,088.00	12,231.00	16,231.00
Net	-808.00	-231.00	769.00
Beginning Balance	2,204.00	1,396.00	1,165.00
Ending Balance	1,396.00	1,165.00	1,934.00

Table 4. Explanation of budget items.

2006-2008 RTC Budget Narrative

Revenue

Annual Dues	Student, Individual, Non-profit, and Business levels (\$20-\$140)
Sponsorships	\$250 - \$10,000 level sponsors
Community Grants & gifts	Headwaters Grant, other contributions
Tech Directory Ads	income for Tech Directory Ads
Other Projects	fee for services, events/workshops, other contracting
Total Revenues	Sum of all revenues

Expenditures

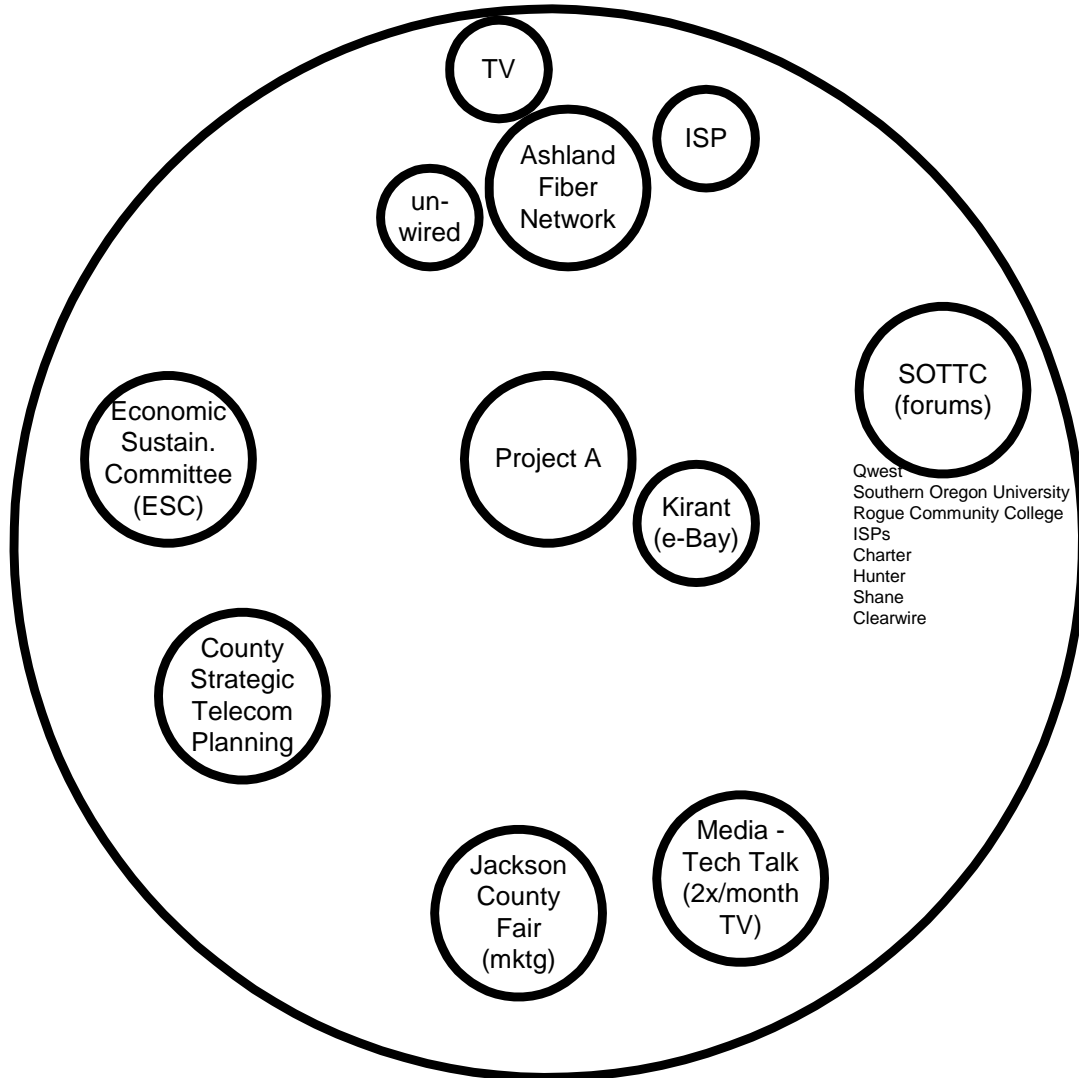
Contractor fees	RTC administrative staff, other project staff as needed
Bank Services Charges	banking fees
Dues & Subscriptions	Membership in Tech Advocacy Organizations
Other Projects	events/workshops, RTC match for grants
Meeting Supplies	food for general meetings, picnic, holiday social; miscellaneous items
Postage	snail mail
Scholarship	1-\$1000 scholarship/year
Travel	RTC sponsored travel for board and staff
Printing & Reproduction	Tech Directory, collateral materials, meeting materials
Professional Fees	Marketing, Attorney
Rent	meeting rooms, equipment, storage space
Advertising/Marketing	general RTC marketing, does not include projects
Web Hosting	For the new RTC website
Non-profit Filing Fee	Yearly fee
Miscellaneous	anything else that doesn't have a category yet
Total Expenditures	Sum of all expenditures

Net Revenues - expenditures

Beginning Balance	Beginning Bank Balance as of February 22, 2006 (minus prior deposits from dues and ads)
Ending Balance	Beginning Bank Balance + Net (ending balance carries over as beginning balance for the next year)

Appendix

Ashland Community Operating System (COS)



Key components of the Ashland COS include planning, economic development, business partnerships, marketing and branding, education & outreach, as well as infrastructure. RTC will define the COS for Humboldt County.