



BellSouth To Upgrade Rural Town's Telecom Infrastructure

The telecommunications company's Connected Community program in Georgia is designed to boost business activity.

By Jim Nash, [InformationWeek](#)

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BellSouth Corp. has designated its first rural Georgia city for a telecom-infrastructure upgrade. As part of a program called BellSouth Connected Communities, the telecommunications company says it's going to allocate more assets in Swainsboro.

The company says it looked at Swainsboro's needs and will deploy two remote broadband gateways by July 1, increasing the percentage of DSL-accessible lines so that it matches the national average.

BellSouth is betting that new infrastructure will create new revenue from the town of 6,943 people (of whom 55% are women, 45% are men) through increased use of advanced telecom functions and through new businesses drawn to the area. It's preparing to find other towns in need of upgrades.

The spread-out town, 163 red-clay miles from Atlanta, wants all of that, too. Right now, half the commerce conducted in Swainsboro comes from school, health and social services, and manufacturing. While the median household income and home value are below the state average, so is unemployment.

Getting a telecom upgrade frees the town from having to make that investment, instead letting it focus on luring new businesses.

