

## **Sedgwick Computer Center and book fair to be showcased at Nov. 4 Open House**

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

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As a result of the combined efforts, careful planning and dedicated implementation of Platte Valley School District and PC Telcom, in conjunction with a grant award from The U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Utility Service (RUS), Sedgwick community members will now enjoy the benefits of a Community Computer Center. It is equipped with 10 computers and PC Telcom's hi-speed Internet service.

An open house to showcase the new computer center and the Platte Valley School District (PVSD) Book Fair is scheduled Thursday, Nov. 4 from 5-7 p.m. at Sedgwick Elementary School.

The need for higher bandwidth (Hi-speed Internet) for members of the Sedgwick community was recognized by PC Telcom. However, providing higher bandwidth in rural areas is very cost prohibitive and seemed impossible to implement.

PC Telcom CEO/GM Vince Kropp searched for possible solutions and discovered a grant that would provide many of the critical components required to provide broadband in areas that had no access to broadband service. This information sparked ideas, and the vision of how to provide hi-speed Internet to the citizens of Sedgwick was conceived.

One of the requirements within the grant was that the awardee (PC Telcom) must provide free Internet service to a "community center" for at least two years.

PVSD and PC Telcom met on several occasions to discuss the broadband needs of the school system, as well as the community members of Sedgwick. It was decided, together, they could make things happen.

The grant from RUS was pursued with vigor, letters of support were provided by PVSD and other community leaders. To everyone's delight, the Community Broadband grant was awarded and the process of implementing the plan to bring higher bandwidth and the community computer center to Sedgwick began.

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Involved deeply in the process, PVSD utilized the talents of their students. Under the direction of Brandon Marquez, tech ed instructor at PVSD High School, the center was completed. Marquez demonstrated his commitment of support for his students, PVSD and his community, by dedicating many hours of personal time to this project.

The RUS grant not only made the community computer center possible for Sedgwick, but now, PC Telcom, through the installation of 12 miles of fiber optic cable between Hwy 385 and Sedgwick (provided in part by the grant) can offer robust hi-speed Internet plans that range from 1Mb/384Kb through 10Mb/768Kb to the citizens of Sedgwick.

Once broadband service is delivered to the town of Sedgwick over the fiber optics, it is then deployed to individual premises via cable modem service and its cable television facilities.

It took a plan and the combined efforts of many to make this all possible for the community of Sedgwick.