

For Immediate Release

Vermont Interactive Television Recognized for Outstanding Achievements in Distance Learning Technology

Vermont Interactive Television (VIT) is the recipient of two major awards for excellence and innovation in the development and delivery of distance learning technology.

The 21st Century Award for Best Practices in Distance Learning was awarded in May by the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA).

The award is presented annually to an organization that has demonstrated pioneering methods in the field of distance learning, developed innovations to the delivery of distance learning programs, and demonstrated the ability to evolve with the ever-changing technology and nature of the field.

Tara Lidstone, Executive Director of VIT, explains how they became nominated for such a prestigious award, *"A case study was done and the industry leaders were impressed by what they saw ... a public system, serving all sectors of the state of Vermont... it's a really extensive and robust infrastructure, and the tech expertise is there as well... we're very unique."*

In June, the 2011 Computerworld Honor for Training and Education was the second award presented to VIT at a black tie affair in Washington DC. The Computerworld Honors Program recognizes those organizations which create and use information technology to promote and advance the public welfare, benefit society and change the world for the better.

The honor was a major one for VIT as they were among one thousand original international candidates considered by industry leaders to be the very best in their field. At the end of the submission process, VIT was one of only 250 organizations who were handed an award for excellence and innovation in technology that supports and advances the citizens which it serves.

About VIT

VIT was launched in 1988 as a pilot program within the Vermont Technical College curriculum. VIT's mission is to support the economic health and development of Vermont and its citizens by providing the technical infrastructure and operational expertise necessary to deliver education, training and information equally to all areas of Vermont.

The pilot program has grown into the largest videoconferencing network in the state, with 17 room-based locations throughout Vermont, 4 mobile units which can travel to an organization's location when necessary, and a newly-launched desktop service, all capable of connecting to each other and to anywhere in the world.

Besides the wonderful educational opportunities and business development capabilities VIT offers Vermonters, perhaps one of the biggest merits of the company is the fact that it is helping the Green Mountain State stay Green by providing a travel alternative that's environmentally friendly.

Lidstone acknowledges the challenge that lays ahead for Vermont, "There's an ongoing balance that the state's trying to strike between economic development and environmental preservation, which is not easy." Not easy, but possible, which VIT clearly illustrates.

On an average year, VIT saves Vermonters 4.9 MILLION miles of driving.

An equally impressive figure is the 221,000 gallons of gasoline not purchased annually by Vermonters because of the videoconferencing services VIT offers. Not only is that environmentally friendly – it's wallet-friendly too, as gasoline prices continue to climb and reach all-time highs across the nation. VIT's services also prevented emissions of 190 TONS of air pollution and 2,500 TONS of greenhouse gases.

Because of the videoconferencing services VIT provides, local businesses can keep, or in some instances gain a competitive edge, colleges and technical schools can reach more students who would otherwise not be able to earn a degree, government agencies are run more efficiently, and non-profit organizations can do more with less.

About The United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA)

The USDLA was formed in 1987 and was the first non-profit Distance Learning association in the United States to support Distance Learning research. The USDLA recognizes that distance learning is an ever-changing field within the education and training industry and strives to support the development and application of distance learning, education and training by uniting learners around the world. The USDLA trademarked logo is the recognized worldwide symbol of dedicated professionals committed to the distance learning industry. <http://www.usdla.org>.

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