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Texas Connects Coalition and LiveAir Networks Provide Internet Café for MS 150 Cyclists

La Grange, TX , April 21st 2012 — As thousands of BP MS 150 cyclists spent the night at the Fayette County fairgrounds in La Grange at the end of the first day of the ride from Houston to Austin, an Internet Service Provider (ISP) and a technology-oriented not-for-profit organization teamed up to provide free broadband access to the riders.

LiveAir Networks, a Smithville-based ISP and the Texas Connects Coalition (TxC2) partnered to provide broadband and an Internet café for the annual event. The high-speed Internet access and laptops at the Internet café allowed riders to email friends and family, check in with social media, and stay updated on news, weather, and other information.

LiveAir Networks, which provides wireless Internet at the fairgrounds year-round, reached out to TFA to establish the first-ever Internet café for the event.



J.W. Breeden, President and CEO of LiveAir Networks, said “LiveAir is pleased to have worked with the MS 150 again, as we have for the last five years, providing network support services. We are happy to have the involvement of TFA in the event as we share common goals of broadband access and availability throughout rural America.” He added, “We look forward to continuing our partnership with TxC2 and TFA for years to come with both the MS 150 and other events which raise the technological profile of rural America.”

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Internet Café for MS 150 Cyclists

For TxC2, this was the coalition's first opportunity to set up a mobile Internet access site in one of the many communities it serves across Texas. TxC2, a partnership between Houston-based Technology For All (TFA) and Austin Free-Net, provides broadband opportunities to underserved and vulnerable Texans.

"This is just the first of many partnerships we are going to form to bring computers and internet access to the people of our communities," said Libbey Scheible, Director of Programs & Operations for the Rural Texas and San Antonio office of TFA, based in Smithville.



"For most of our cafes, we are going to be choosing events and sites with an eye to reach the people who are underserved in the technology area in accordance with our mission," Scheible added.

Along with Scheible, TFA President & CEO Will Reed and TFA staff were on hand at the Internet café to help with computer use or just give a welcome to worn-out riders. Strong southeast winds during the day meant tired riders and later-than-normal arrival times.

Many riders were glad just to see a place to sit down at the café and unwind while accessing the Internet. For some riders, they appreciated the opportunity to have a place to charge their phones.

Based on the success, TxC2 has been asked to provide an Internet café at next year's MS 150 overnight stop at the fairgrounds. The café location will be near the central bus stop, same as this year's location.

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Internet Café for MS 150 Cyclists

LiveAir Networks is one of the Central Texas region's leading technical services providers. Since 2004, LiveAir has invested over \$750,000 in its Central Texas infrastructure covering over 2,400 square miles of Bastrop, Fayette, and Lee counties of Texas including the towns of Smithville, Giddings, Lexington, La Grange, and Flatonia. LiveAir's privately owned and operated Metro Ethernet network delivers rural customers unparalleled client service and connectivity that ensures speed, reliability, and performance. With LiveAir, businesses and residents alike can count on robust broadband, voice, information technology, and Internet-based solutions created and supporting by uncompromising technical experts.

Technology For All received a Broadband Technology Opportunities Program grant for the TXC2 project through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, to provide computers and free digital literacy/job skills training to more than 70 public computing sites throughout Texas, including Houston, Austin, San Antonio, and rural Texas including the Fayette County Library, Smithville Recreation Center, and Bastrop Public Library. (www.txc2.org, www.techforall.org, www.austinfree.net)

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Technology For All (TFA) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization on a mission to empower under-resourced communities through the tools of technology. By working together with local community-based organizations, corporations, foundations, technology providers and public entities, TFA creates educational, economic and personal opportunities for low-income persons and the communities in which they live. TFA's offices are located in Houston's East End at 2220 Broadway, Houston, Texas 77012. For more information, visit www.techforall.org; call 713-454-6400.