

Subject: TOC & OWA Officially Launch Virtual Boardroom



Virtual Boardroom Launched

May 29, 2008

TOC and OWA Board Members and RWIB Staff:

As many of you already know - earlier this spring the Administrative Office invested in the tools to launch a virtual boardroom for our 24 county area. We're thrilled to announce that this new collaborative tool is now ready for full deployment!

The TOC/OWA Virtual Boardroom:

1. Supports our new committee and board structure by providing a low cost method for meeting on a regular basis;
2. Continues our ability to talk with one another, to see one another, and to share information and documents in real time, even when we're not meeting face to face regularly;
3. Will provide cost savings to TOC/OWA by reducing travel costs for board members and staff and also reducing lost time due to associated travel;
4. Will provide cost savings to you and your business or organization by reducing travel costs as well as lost time due to travel, etc.;
5. Provides an opportunity for our organization to demonstrate to other rural organizations and business and industry the use of the newest tools available for global collaboration and innovation;
6. Supports additional collaboration across the area and within regions;
7. Will help us to achieve our mission and vision more efficiently and effectively; and
8. The virtual boardroom also provides the infrastructure for us to develop new program services and delivery methods that can be made available to any individual across Oregon (the nation or the world for that matter) who has access to a PC.

In order for us to realize the benefits of this opportunity - it will be

essential that all TOC and OWA members move ahead with us.

Please review the details in the other sections of this e-newsletter regarding this new technology and what you'll need on your desktop in order for us to truly realize the benefits this great system has to offer. If you have questions or concerns about the virtual boardroom please contact me directly at 1.866.888.4862 x219 or kris@tocowa.org.

Sincerely, Kris Latimer, CEO



What is the Virtual Boardroom, really?

The Virtual Boardroom is a web based, state of the art, rich media conferencing solution. Our virtual boardroom is a complete bundle that provides for real-time collaboration and multiparty, fully interactive Voice IP (VoIP, Voice Internet Protocol) and desktop video conferencing. An added bonus of this bundle is that the VoIP technology - once everyone is equipped, will replace our need to use separate (pricy) conference calls.

Is it proven/tested? Yes it is. The platform has been in use since 1998. Installations include government, military, financial services, legal and many other demanding environments.

What can we do when meeting in the virtual board room? Everything that we do when meeting in person with the exception of shaking hands! We can share PowerPoints and virtually any other document. Participants can see everyone who is equipped with a webcam and whose camera is turned on. We can hear one another and because the VoIP is multipoint - we can actually hear everyone at once ... This means audio won't cut in and out as people speak, type or shuffle papers, like it does on a conference call.

Is it user friendly? It sure is. When you receive a meeting notice we'll include a meeting name/link. Simply click on the link (or type it into your browser) and you'll be directed to the virtual boardroom portal, you'll see our logo and a list of upcoming meetings. Click on the meeting you've come to attend and you're there.

The first time you attend a meeting it will take a few moments for the Virtual Boardroom to meet with your computer and to install the necessary Active X Control. It is likely, due to the high level spam and virus blockers we're all running that you'll be asked to OK this operation - and obviously you'll want to say yes. Once that's done though - you're set!

What will I see/hear? Let's say you're a member of the Communications Committee - when you arrive at the Virtual Boardroom you will be able to see, on your monitor, the names of everyone who has connected and will also see the meeting summary sheet - indicating which meeting you're at, who is expected and the meeting agenda.

If everyone on the call has a headset or microphone and speakers - we'll be using the VoIP and you'll immediately be able to talk to one another. Additionally you'll be able to see those folks

that have cameras (providing the meeting host has authorized them). Once the meeting starts the Chair can move through the agenda, discussion, action and materials just like a regular meeting.

Can members of the public participate? Public Meeting Notices will include instructions to access the virtual board room. Anyone with a PC and speakers can gain access via the link provided, observe and listen to an open meeting (we do have the ability to secure meetings if we're in need of an Executive Session.) A note will be posted with all public meeting notices regarding special assistance, etc.

What we all need ... is to move ahead together in order to take full advantage of the opportunities that the Virtual Boardroom presents.

First and foremost - we need everyone to be able to take advantage of the VoIP and that means we all need to have a headset OR speaker and microphone system for our computers. By using the Virtual Boardroom rather than conference calls we will save hundreds of dollars. Either of these peripherals is a fairly inexpensive item that plugs right into a USB port. We found USB headsets manufactured by Logitech for as low as \$30 by shopping just a little on the web.

Secondly - it would be *optimal* if we all had webcams, this is what makes the system so fun and seem so personal. We purchased for our Admin Office "Virtual Boardroom Studio" and "studios" in each of our provider offices, the Logitech Orbitz Webcam that adjusts for light and auto centers. This camera runs about \$100.00 (after a websearch). There are less expensive webcams available through Logitech and other manufacturers but keep in mind your video experience may not be as good.

To help move things along we:

- Are happy to provide technical assistance in purchasing the necessary peripheral hardware items described above. You may want to check out www.logitech.com and look at their webcam and communications products to get an idea of what is available as well as cost.
- Will provide USB headsets at no cost, to the Officers of each Board as well as the Chairs of each of the Committees (be looking for these in the mail next week).
- Will provide purchase assistance to **OWA Business and Industry representatives** who request it for 50% of the purchase price or up to \$20 for a headset and up to \$40 for a camera. (See "coupon" below).
- Do the legwork for you by purchasing and shipping the items to you. Purchase costs would be deducted from a future travel reimbursement (e-mail Jackie at jackie@tocowa.org).
- Ask that **public partners who serve on the OWA move** ahead with the necessary steps in order to have access to the hardware described above.
- Will be surveying members over the next few months to find out who has what.

We realize that these are hard budget times for everyone - but your assistance by investing in

this technology and supporting this effort will provide so many opportunities for growth and progress that the benefit will be re-couped many times.

Survivors Un-Conference 2008

New tools - new opportunities ...

We'll be using this dynamic new technology to bring together youth across Oregon (and around the world) in the first ever Survivors Un-Conference. We're planning a virtual event that will kick-off in early July with a series of speakers and seminars that will be available (open entry, open exit) through the summer and well into the fall (maybe even year round).



Youth will be able to access the Un-Conference from the Virtual Boardrooms we're helping to develop in regional offices, in web equipped classrooms and from home computers.

Participants will attend on-line "jam sessions" with nationally recognized motivational speakers, business and industry leaders, take part in a virtual community that is being developed using available social networking software (think facebook), and to earn small incentives for on-going positive participation.

Where & When

World Wide Web
Details will be posted
at <http://www.tocowa.org>
as they become available.

Peripheral Purchase Assist:

OWA Business & Industry Representatives -- We encourage you to move ahead with the purchase of necessary peripherals. We know you'll find these tools to be enormously useful for you as a Board member as well as in your business. We are able to offer assistance in purchasing these items as we mentioned above - 50% of the purchase price or \$20 / headset and \$40/webcam.

Please print this section of the newsletter and attach to your paid receipt or invoice. Mail these together to:

Attention Kris Latimer
The Oregon Consortium
260 Ferry St., Suite 202
Albany, OR 97321

Please indicate here which item you have purchase:

USB Headset

_____ Webcam

Reimbursements will be distributed within 3 weeks of receipt.

The Oregon Consortium & Oregon Workforce Alliance
260 Ferry St., SW Suite 202
Albany, Oregon 97321
541.928.0241

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