

# Connecting the Technology Dots Along the Central Gulf Coast

Communities across the nation are launching efforts to diversify and strengthen their economies through technology- and innovation-driven developments. One of only a handful of such efforts crossing state and county lines is [www.iTenWired.com](http://www.iTenWired.com), a regional resource Web portal recently initiated by the Pensacola Bay Area Chamber of Commerce.

The program is backed by four economic development partners – the Mobile Area Chamber, the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance, TEAM Santa Rosa and the Okaloosa County Economic Development Council – and brings more than 100 technology entrepreneurs and their ideas together for the first time in the five-county region of Mobile and Baldwin counties in Alabama, and Escambia, Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties in Florida.

It is named to represent the region accessed by Interstate 10, and iTenWired is designed to help the Central Gulf Coast remain competitive in the global economy by showcasing the area's technology entrepreneurs; identifying success stories; connecting entrepreneurs to resources and assets to help grow their businesses; and



The image is a composite graphic. On the left is a screenshot of the iTenWired website, showing a navigation menu with items like 'People Like You', 'Success Stories', 'The Area', 'Get Wired', 'Getting Started', 'About Us', 'Breaking News', and 'Calendar of Events'. In the center is a banner for CMIMI (Central Mobile Innovation and Military Innovation) with a globe graphic. On the right is a photograph of Charles Wood, a man in a red shirt, smiling. Below the banner is the logo for TECHSOFT Technical Software Services, Inc. with the tagline 'Excellence Through Technology'.

For more information about the program, visit [www.iTenWired.com](http://www.iTenWired.com).

connecting entrepreneurs, researchers, universities, investors and military innovations.

Charles Wood, the Pensacola Chamber's senior vice president of economic development, described how the idea was formed. "We realized a group of dynamic and successful entrepreneurs was emerging across our region and they were driving great business success and having positive impact on the area. We knew we needed a nontraditional, economic development track to aid these entrepreneurs. It needed to build upon the resources and assets we had already discovered through asset-mapping, help identify talent for these compa-

nies and provide the support base for existing business, as well as attract and recruit more companies like these."

Marketing the talent-pool of the upper Gulf Coast's entrepreneurs is a goal of the Gulf Coast Technology Council (GCTC), a Mobile Area Chamber initiative, explained Bayne Bridges, president of Daphne-based Logical Communication Services Inc. and current GCTC president. The group joined the Pensacola Chamber's effort in November 2006.

"A team approach is very important to our economic future and competitiveness in the global economy. We must promote

and grow the technology sector to provide jobs for our future leaders and attract new industry that can create the high-paying jobs," Bridges said.

Bridges added, "Tech companies in the area and those introduced on the site are not bound to a Gulf Coast location. Yet they chose to set up their businesses here. This sends a strong message that the Gulf Coast is not only a great place to live but also a business-friendly area."

"It's the magnet approach – if we showcase how some have built businesses and been successful, hopefully others will follow," said Wood.

The community connected through iTen Wired, including the universities in the region, will begin in a virtual manner with e-mails, patent and licensing activity, an events calendar, and the sharing of information and educational opportunities. "The long-term vision is to grow this community by bringing all parties together through combined venture forums, networking events and conferences," said Wood.

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