

The Intelligent Community Forum will use the data provided on this form for the first stage of its international awards program: the selection of the Smart21 Communities of the Year, semi-finalists for the Intelligent Community of the Year award. The Smart21 will be announced in October at a ceremony hosted by the Institute for the Study of the Intelligent Community at Walsh University in Canton, Ohio, USA. After the announcement of the Smart21, the Awards program will proceed as follows:

October-December 2013

Each of the Smart21 Communities is required to complete a detailed questionnaire in order to be considered for ICF's Top7 and Intelligent Community of the Year (ICY) awards. The information in this form will be evaluated by an independent research firm, which produces numerical scores for each community.

January 2014

The seven top-scoring communities are named as ICF's Top7 Intelligent Communities (finalists) online and at an event at Taichung City, Taiwan, the 2013 Intelligent Community of the Year.

Feb-April 2014

The Top7 Communities host an ICF co-founder for not more than two business days, at the community's expense, for a site visit to validate the information provided to the Forum. The co-founder's report on the community is reviewed by the international jury, which votes on its choice for ICY. To select Intelligent Community of the Year, ICF combines the quantitative scores of the independent research firm on a weighted basis with the independent votes of the jury.

June 2014

ICF invites representatives and citizens from the Top7 to New York City for its annual Summit. Each of the Top7 will participate in roundtable discussions, a ceremony honoring their achievement and an individual interview on stage. On the final day of the Summit, one of the Top7 will be named Intelligent Community of the Year. The Intelligent Community of the Year is barred from entering the Awards program again but is named to the international jury.

Association

Communities named to the Smart21, Top7 or Intelligent Community of the Year become eligible to join the ICF Foundation, the membership association of the Forum, which provides a permanent platform for collaboration on economic development and driving the growth of the Intelligent Community movement.

Completing the Application. Fill in the fields below. Each field will expand to make room for your complete answer. Save the file to your computer and email it to ICF at awards@intelligentcommunity.org by **September 23, 2013**. The Analysts for the Smart21 will use only the information on this form in making its evaluation. Do not send additional information or attachments.

Deadline for
Nominations:
23 Sept 2013

2014 Theme: Community as Canvas. In the 2013-2014 Awards cycle, ICF will focus on the power of culture to help or hinder the transformation of towns, cities and regions into Intelligent Communities. Culture is a word that defies easy definition. Say the word in one situation, and it is about the arts and traditional crafts. Mention it in business, and you are talking about the shared identity of the group and how individuals in that group should behave. In a place, whether city or nation, it means the accumulation of history, language and shared experience that shapes every individual and institution. Culture is all of these things – which is why it matters so much. Culture gives us a sense of identity and belonging. It is the foundation for all progress and also sets limits to how much progress we can make. The 2013-2014 Awards will examine three specific aspects of culture in the Intelligent Community - in local arts and crafts, as heritage, and as embedded attitudes – and how culture helps power community success. More information is available in the white paper, *Community as Canvas*, available on the Nominations page at www.intelligentcommunity.org/nominations.

Nomination

Name of Community

Mitchell, South Dakota (Davison County)

The following questions provide an opportunity to tell the community's story: its recent history and background, the challenges it faces, how the community has met those challenges, and the results it has achieved. **Before answering the questions, review the description of the Intelligent Community Indicators and Success Factors** beginning on page 14 or visit ICF's Web site at www.intelligentcommunity.org. Your nomination will be more successful if you fully understand how ICF analyzes a community's development.

As you answer the questions, you will find overlap in content among them. This is deliberate: it offers you the opportunity to tell multiple stories about your community's experience. Wherever possible, avoid repeating information from one question to another.

Vital Statistics

Population	Municipality	15,254	Metro Area (if applicable)	Micropolitan Area (MiSA) 22,869
Labor Force	Municipality	9,000 (2012 Annual Avg.)	Metro Area (if applicable)	Micropolitan Area (MiSA) 13,370
Area	Municipality	12.14 sq. miles	Metro Area (if applicable)	Micropolitan Area (MiSA) 873 sq. miles

1. **Background** (Maximum: 1 page) Describe the community's location, features of interest, demographics and history that relate to current conditions.

The 98th meridian:

43.71 Degrees North Latitude / 98.04 Degrees West Longitude

Enter these coordinates on a GPS device and the digital map will locate a place on the North American continent that is roughly halfway between the earth's equator and its northern pole. The map may not tell you that it is also the geographic boundary that frames the eastern edge of the "Great Plains." Ninety-eight degrees west longitude outlines a place where the Midwestern economy and culture ends and a Western economy and culture begins. Where production agriculture transitions from farms with precision-planted row crops into rolling wheat fields and cattle ranches.

The 98th meridian is a transition point of both demography and climate: Fewer than 20 people per square mile inhabit the land west of the line and more than 20 people per square mile live east of this line. Average annual rainfall west of the 98th meridian is less than 20 inches, while more than 20 inches falls to the east of the same longitude. It articulates a vast region with the greatest extremes in temperature and climatic conditions of any region in the United States.

It is within this environment that the people of Mitchell, South Dakota live out their lives. The Great Plains is a region where people are separated by distance and time and the world's economic and population centers are distant. The personality of people that chose to live in this environment and those that stayed shapes a story of clash and contrast, bison and broadband, cross-pollination of both agriculture and human culture, that only such a flashpoint could tell.

Of Bison and Broadband:

The first native inhabitants were an agricultural people living on the banks of the Firesteel Creek (now Lake Mitchell) in the Mitchell area over a 1,000 years ago. The Mitchell Prehistoric Indian Village archeology site is currently discovering more each year about these people and their lives. Centuries later, the Native American Plains tribes were North America's great horse culture with strong spiritual ties to the land. In the late 1800's these tribes clashed with the European arrivals seeking farm land and homesteads. The echoes of this clash reverberate throughout the art and culture of Mitchell.

The history of the City of Mitchell is in many ways emblematic of Great Plains pioneer communities: A prairie town founded in the late 1800's as a railroad trading center with strong economic ties to agriculture.

But that is where the similarities end. Unique to the Mitchell community is an entrepreneurial culture derived in part from its agricultural roots. Symbolic of this land and culture is a "Palace on the Prairie," the Corn Palace. It is a tribute to the past and celebrates the marketing and promotion techniques of the 1890's. This same culture has developed a surprising number of communication technology companies. These companies are engaged in software development, engineering, design and installation of broadband communications for small cities and rural areas both in the United States and internationally. These firms employ over 500 skilled technicians and educated professionals.

2. **Challenge** (Maximum: 3 pages) Describe the economic, social, political, and technological challenges to the community's future that led it to begin a process of change using information and communications technology.

Buffalo Commons:

Twenty five years ago, Professors Frank and Deborah Popper, of Rutgers University conducted an academic exercise in land-use theory regarding the Great Plains region. According to their research, vast areas in the 10 Great Plains states - from the 98th meridian to the Rockies - were experiencing a sharp decline in population and prosperity. Many counties in the region had experienced at least a 50 percent population loss since 1930. Much of the region had less than four persons per square mile, a high median age, twenty percent or more in poverty and capital investment fewer than fifty dollars per capita.

In December 1987 an article by the Poppers on the land-use future of the Plains appeared in "Planning," a professional journal. Settling the prairies, they argued, was the largest, longest-running agricultural and environmental mistake in United States history. Fusing economics, landscape analysis and statistical modeling, the Poppers mapped a gloomy future for the region in unprecedented, county-by-county detail.

The research concluded that over the next 30 years the Great Plains should become a "Buffalo Commons," a huge land reserve with more than 139,000 square miles of open land and wildlife refuge. The Buffalo Commons area included much of western South Dakota, North Dakota, western Nebraska, and eastern Montana; portions of Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas, and selected counties in Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming.

Population Decline:

Fifty years ago, two-thirds of the world's population lived in rural areas. Today, about half live in urban areas as more people move to cities with the perception of better jobs in mind. About eighty percent of U.S. residents live in urban areas. While Davison County (Mitchell is the principal city in the county) has actually seen slow growth in population from 16,821 people in 1930 to 19,504 in 2010, Mitchell's primary trade area consisting of five (5) adjacent counties has decreased by one third from 58,557 in 1930 to 39,645 in 2010.

The Mitchell Micropolitan Statistical Area (MiSA) consisting of Davison and Hanson Counties has fewer people in its population base compared to eighty years ago with 22,952 people living in the two counties

in 1930 and 22,869 people living in the MiSA in 2010.

The worst impact of decades of population loss is the "brain drain" of talent and the loss of the region's youth and its future leaders. The lack of regional workforce is now stunting the growth of new and expanding service and manufacturing industries.

Another challenge of the northern Plains and its communities is how to remain economically relevant in a modern global economy. Once vibrant small communities in the Mitchell area that were the economic and cultural hub for hundreds of farm families have lost their economic and cultural purpose. The result is the closure of businesses and schools, deteriorating infrastructure and housing, and an aging population. These impacts from population decline have become the accepted norm for residents of the region.

Misperceptions:

Many if not most urban residents and business leaders look upon rural areas in the Great Plains as having an undesirable quality of life. The Great Plains are viewed as "flyover" states. There is a perception of rural areas as lacking in cultural and technological sophistication. Changing this perception and redefining what it means to live in these areas is a major marketing challenge. If talented and skilled younger employees are to be attracted into rural areas, changing the perception of rural as a higher quality of life becomes a strategic goal.

3. **Strategy & Programs** (Maximum: 3 pages) Explain the ideas, plans and process that the community put into place to address these challenges and seize opportunities. Describe the organizations involved, how collaboration was established, and how key ideas were developed and formed into a coherent strategy. Please organize your response by Intelligent Community Indicator.

Introduction

Just as the Poppers were traveling in the Great Plains proposing the conversion of the region to become an "American Serengeti," Mitchell community leadership recognized the need to redirect its economic and community development strategy. Agriculture would remain the backbone of the community's economic base while manufacturing and service industries needed to be recruited and expanded thereby further diversifying the export economy. Local leadership remained steadfast that the people of each community would determine their own future – not statistics.

The outcome was a strategic planning process entitled Vision 2000. The plan called for a community-wide emphasis on education, health care, infrastructure and recreation as key contributors to quality of life, a cornerstone of economic growth.

What the Poppers could not know was that the advances of energy technology would begin to transform the economy of the Northern Plains. The country is now aware that fracking technology precipitated an oil and gas boom in North Dakota, and that the demand for green energy sources would make the Great Plains the wind energy capital of the world creating new jobs in rural America. Just 30 miles from Mitchell, a \$362 million wind energy farm was completed in 2012.

Remarkable progress was attained in the following decade: Two hospitals merged to produce a single health care delivery organization (which stands today as the city's largest employer, with new nursing staff and medical technicians coming directly from the graduating classes of Dakota Wesleyan University and Mitchell Technical Institute). Two new elementary schools were built, one on the campus of and in partnership with DWU, the other adjacent to the city's recreation center to promote and facilitate after-school programs and community wellness for all ages. Investment in the city's infrastructure was dramatically increased. Mitchell Technical Institute expanded its communication training programs with the first (and only) civilian satellite technology program in the nation. DWU constructed a new athletic center. A new low- and moderate- income housing development was built through a partnership between the city and the Mitchell Area Development Corporation. A new senior center was built and public transit

was expanded. An \$18 million municipal bond for the construction of a pipeline to deliver high quality Missouri River water to the city's residents was approved by voters.

Contrasted against this string of progress, one primary failure laid the foundation for Mitchell's success as a hub of communications technology. Initiated by the leadership at MTI, a plan for a municipal telephone system was developed by local communications consulting firm Martin and Associates. The plan called for the construction of a redundant, survivable broadband fiber optic network within the community for the delivery of voice, data and video. The overall cost of the project was a concern and it eventually was defeated by public vote.

Both MTI and Martin and Associates knew that if Mitchell was to succeed in the coming decades, an investment in communications infrastructure would be critical. With support from the city and a forward-thinking leaders, communications technology began to blossom in Mitchell. MTI built a Technology Center which not only served its students, but the community. It also housed the physical technology for several communication networks. Its Network Operations Center (NOC) was built with a federal grant to the strictest national security standards. Today it hosts a nucleus of physical equipment and redundant connections for SDN Communications and the Digital Dakota Network serving the entire state, and is host to Internet II, the ultra-high speed Internet available to the South Dakota public university system.

The apparent desire of the community to host cutting-edge communications technology prompted a regional company, Midcontinent Communications, to expand and develop broadband technology in Mitchell well ahead of other South Dakota communities. And in 2005, with the aid of an RUS loan, Santel Communications opened a new division, Mitchell Telecom, which embarked upon a \$21 million overbuild and a fiber-to-premise system.

Martin and Associates was sold to CHR Solutions and eventually two new communications engineering and software firms were founded: Innovative Systems and Vantage Point Solutions. The location of these three internationally reputable companies, along with the expertise and administration of local transport technologies by MTI, made Mitchell the Tier 3 telecommunications capital of North America by the middle of the 2000s decade.

Today Innovative Systems, Vantage Point Solutions and CHR Solutions are providing software, engineering and consulting to communications companies across the globe. All three companies have experienced unparalleled growth, dramatically increasing their workforces, expanding their facilities, and investing heavily in the community.

By 2010, there was a need to renew the strategic plans for the community's future. A new planning process, Focus 2020, was modeled upon the previously successful Vision 2000, to create a vision for the future through the year 2020. Focus 2020 concentrated on diverse areas like education, land use and development, Lake Mitchell development, regional health care, increased visitor traffic, regional economic development, governmental structures and quality of place.

The Mitchell Area Development Corporation commissioned an economic base study and developed key strategies to grow the economy by focusing efforts to grow export industries through the promotion and marketing of Mitchell's culture, characterized by its:

- Educated and trained workforce
- Positive business environment
- Lower tax burden
- Low regulation
- Reasonable cost of doing business
- Infrastructure
- Roads
- Utilities

- Communications
- Good quality of life for employees
- Great education systems
- Activities for children
- Low crime
- Cultural opportunities
- Housing
- Shopping
- Recreation: parks, athletics, outdoor activities
- Reasonable cost of living
- Attractive community

Broadband

There are four primary providers of telecom services: SDN Communications, Midcontinent Communications, CenturyLink (formerly Qwest/US West), and Mitchell Telecom. These carriers have independent backbone systems with redundant fiber and scalable bandwidth up to 10 Gbps. SDN Communications is a regional carrier based in South Dakota, but its network reach extends into eight states, including cities in Wyoming, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Nebraska. Midcontinent Communications offers a variety of high-volume data transmission solutions across a variety of transport methods. The CenturyLink network covers the entire continental United States and has one of the largest fiber footprints in the U.S

Mitchell Telecom and its parent company, Santel Communications, are known for success in the telephone industry, delivering the newest technology to their subscribers before many other areas receive it. The company leveraged the expertise and solutions provided by local companies Innovative Systems and Vantage Point Solutions, and invested \$21 million in a Fiber-to-the-Premises overbuild in Mitchell. The vision of a fully fiber optic broadband network was realized when the project was built by Mitchell Telecom in 2005.

Knowledge Workforce

As the traditional family farm operation transformed to rely more heavily on technology, as the manufacturing and service sector of the economy grew, and as the broadband network opened opportunities for local residents, students, and entrepreneurs, the educational needs of the community have changed. A recurring theme in the planning activities has been an adaptive, strong, and well-developed educational system supportive of and responsive to early childhood needs, elementary and secondary education excellence, post-secondary choices that are relevant and necessary, and access to lifelong learning options.

In 2006, the Mitchell School District, seeing the need for its students to master new technologies and the opportunity that doing so would provide for those students, initiated a 1:1 laptop computer program. This program provides a laptop for 24/7 use of all of its students in grade 7-12. The program was initiated much earlier than most other school districts in the country and includes grades 7 and 8; in contrast, most districts across the country continue to limit such programs, where they do exist, to high schools only. The most recent development in this area has been the switch from laptop computers in the fall of 2012 to iPads for grades 7 and 8.

The Mitchell School District has also launched a pilot program through a Race to the Top project in 'mass customized learning' to address challenges. The program will provide the district with the capacity to routinely customize learning programs to meet the specific needs and desires of individual students and their parents.

Individualization of instruction has always been a dream of educators, but also one always outside of their grasp without enormous increases in expenditures. Technological advances in hardware and pedagogical

software, however, are making customization increasingly possible and the Mitchell Schools are developing Race to the Top pilots at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. At each of these levels, mass customized learning pilots, only when voluntarily selected by students and instructors, will look something like the following:

Elementary—Streams of K-5 students with about 120-130 students and six main instructors will develop flexible and changing groups to instruct in all the major subject areas such that students can proceed at their own pace and develop full mastery.

Middle School—Extended day and extended year programs will provide middle school-aged students with opportunities to complete all learning tasks at high levels of quality and move on to high school work when they are ready, whether that be before or after the normal age of 14.

High School—An individualized selection of courses, including all graduation requirements, will be developed for each student in a group of 40-60 with four major instructors. Instructional methods will be determined based upon student strengths and interests and provided on individualized and flexible group basis. Students will also be offered coursework through dual enrollment at Mitchell Technical Institute, Dakota Wesleyan University, and the Mid-Central Educational Cooperative virtual high school.

The Mitchell School District, cognizant of the fact that increasing numbers of students are securing positions in the career and technical education fields, has opened a regional (open to students from surrounding schools as well as those enrolled in Mitchell) Mitchell Career and Technical Education (CTE) Academy which provides technical career coursework to students.

In the fall of 2012, the academy opened with programs in culinary arts, welding/ manufacturing, and bio-medical (under the Project Lead the Way program). In the future programs will be added in business education, engineering, auto mechanics, etc. All programs will be operated by Mitchell Technical Institute due to its level of expertise and success in CTE programming. Much of the coursework will also be considered articulated with MTI programs, at a minimum, and students will be dual enrolled at MTI whenever possible.

In the fall of 2013, Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) relocated to a new 80 acre Interstate 90 campus. MTI is a vital part of Mitchell's educational system and has proven an uncompromising agility in adapting to the changing needs of regional businesses. In addition to supplying a large number of part-time workers to businesses in and around Mitchell while they are enrolled in school, many students stay in the Mitchell area after graduation. Its 28 programs in six career divisions provide a large number of workers in occupational areas that are strong in the Mitchell area: agriculture, health care, energy, construction, and communications. MTI specializes in producing technically trained workers in telecommunications, data networking and satellite communications and supplies the bulk of the technical workforce for the communications companies in the state of South Dakota. MTI is a telecommunications hub for eastern South Dakota for the Dakota Digital Network (DDN) and South Dakota Network (SDN), and provides help desk services for the state of South Dakota's digital video network.

Dakota Wesleyan University's Kelley Center has developed one of the premier entrepreneurship programs in the region. The Kelley Center offers students inspiring educational and experiential learning opportunities. Students who are involved with the Kelley Center will have opportunities to explore their creative and innovative ideas, gain support for those ideas through a strong network of regional and state-wide resources, develop leadership skills and learn how to articulate their ideas effectively. Whether it is starting a small business, creating the next great organization, providing transformational leadership, or developing new products, processes and/or services within existing organizations, the Kelley Center will help students set their goals and achieve their dreams.

Dakota Wesleyan University and Mitchell Technical Institute contribute over \$30.3 million to the local

economy, provide over 800 part-time workers, and provide an educated workforce of over 2,500. Between the two institutions, more than 100 graduates stay in Mitchell each year. In fall 2013, both institutions reported record-high enrollment – a sure sign that education has embedded itself into Mitchell’s community, culture, and future.

Digital Inclusion

Mitchell is a part of the Digital Dakota Network (DDN), a statewide interactive video communications system using compressed digital technology to provide a "meeting pipeline" across the state of South Dakota and the global community. The DDN connects the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches of state government, the Board of Regents, private universities, the four public technical schools, municipal governments and the K-12 community.

The network is designed to increase access to education and government and enhance the business, education and health care climate in South Dakota. Studios are located in government facilities, public and private universities, technical education institutions, and high schools. Any business, school, organization, agency or individual may use the DDN system for instruction, training, meetings and presentation purposes.

The state of South Dakota Classroom Connections initiative is a series of specific goals and action plans intended to improve the state’s education system. The goal of Classroom Connections is to provide incentive money for school districts to initiate one-to-one laptop programs for high school students. As earlier stated, Mitchell has been at the forefront of the laptop, and now tablet, movement for students enrolled in public education.

Innovation

Mitchell demonstrates innovation through the continuing development of a community entrepreneurial culture. These initiatives include:

- a. Partnership with the Kelley Center for Entrepreneurship at DWU for stimulating entrepreneurship in the region.
- b. Partnership with “Nation Jobs,” a national web-based job recruitment company for recruitment of employees for area businesses from around the United States.
- c. Establishment of Mitchell Regional Investors LLC, a local equity investment network of “angel” investors to fund entrepreneurs and the growth of emerging businesses.
- d. Piloting of a program of mass, customized learning for volunteer students and instructors at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels, based upon the mass customization now occurring in the private sector.

Marketing and Advocacy

Community involvement and participation are a vital part of the community’s progress. Formally, the Mitchell Area Chamber of Commerce has more than 200 volunteers, 500 members and 18 volunteer board members who serve as ambassadors for the Mitchell community. Mitchell Area Development Corporation has 250 annual memberships with 12 volunteers serving on the board of directors. The new strategic planning process “Focus 2020” engaged over 200 residents in the process.

The Mitchell Area Development Corporation has made a commitment to upgrade the physical image of Mitchell by acquiring property along I-90 as a commercial investment. MTI has invested \$40+ million into a new technology-based campus near I-90. Dakota Wesleyan University has invested over \$30 million in a new health sciences center, a new library, campus center and student housing.

Mitchell leaders are collaborating to get the message out across the U.S. that high quality and skilled jobs are available in the community. Together, the Mitchell Area Chamber of Commerce and the Mitchell Area Development Corporation are developing websites to recruit new workforce (MitchellHasJobs.com) and

provide new and current residents with resources to the community (MitchellChamber.com). These two organizations are currently in the process, in conjunction with the city, of completing an audit of Mitchell's online image to make these and other resources as user-friendly as possible.

4. **Results** (Maximum: 3 pages) Describe the results produced to date by the strategy in terms of new infrastructure, new investment, better quality of life, improved educational achievement, employment growth, income growth, new industries or growth in existing industries (including small and medium-size businesses), and new efficiencies for citizens and organizations. Please organize your response by Intelligent Community Indicator.

Introduction

The key results from the strategy are:

- 1) Three (3) national private communication consulting, engineering and software companies "home grown" in Mitchell, producing over 500 high quality jobs.
- 2) Two new Mitchell based communication service companies are being incubated in the community.
- 3) Every residence and business in the community has access to high speed broadband through fiber-to-the-premise technology.
- 4) Hundreds of communications technicians have been and are currently are being trained for the communications industry workforce at Mitchell Technical Institute.
- 5) An entrepreneurial culture is being nurtured in the community including the work at Dakota Wesleyan University's Kelley Center for Entrepreneurship.
- 6) New office industries are being attracted to locate in Mitchell because of its communication infrastructure. These include Alleviant, LLC a division of Navigant healthcare with a 100 person service center that provides health care billing and coding services for clinics nationwide. Avera Health Systems recently opened a payment center to handle all the billing services for its healthcare system, anticipated to add fifty jobs to the city.

The entrepreneurial development and growth of three (3) communications engineering, consulting, and software companies, CHR Solutions (www.chrsolutions.com), Vantage Point Solutions (www.vantagepnt.com), and Innovative Systems (www.innovsys.com) have created more than 500 high paying professional and technical jobs, and they are changing the income and education demographics of the community.

Mitchell is committed to a regional approach in economic development by providing staffing support for the economic development efforts of smaller cities in the area. New economic development initiatives are centered on developing growth through local entrepreneurship. These initiatives include the Kelley Center for Entrepreneurship at DWU and Mitchell Regional (Angel) Investors LLC.

Broadband

As earlier discussed, Mitchell is a leader in digital technology with four major service providers located in the community, making it one of the most "wired" communities of its size in the U.S. Every home, office and school in Mitchell can be connected with a world-class communications system.

SDN Communications connects with carriers across the country for out-of-region transport. The company has more than 22,000 miles of fiber. The fully survivable network consists of multiple DWDM/SONET rings and Ethernet backbone with Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) functionality offering scalable bandwidth with multiple 10Gbps circuits. SDN also provides phone systems, cabling infrastructure, networking data equipment, managed services, carrier hotel services and secure data center facilities.

Midcontinent Communications offers a variety of high-volume data transmission solutions across a variety of transport methods. If businesses need a T1 or a 10/100/1,000 Mbps solution, Midcontinent can interconnect businesses to create a transparent network connection. Midcontinent can also implement Layer 2 transport, along with Resilient Packet Ring (RPR) over SONET, guaranteeing trouble-free service within Midcontinent's multi-state private network; MPLS, the standard protocol when going across multiple networks, is also available supporting reliable connections to integrate with networks outside the Dakotas.

The CenturyLink network covers the entire continental United States and has one of the largest fiber footprints in the U.S., capable of supporting 40Gbps data transmission rates. Internationally, CenturyLink provides coverage to more than 200 destinations, including landline and mobile terminations and currently handles almost four billion international calls per year.

And the local company, Mitchell Telecom, completed a system overbuild with the installation of a \$21 million fiber-to-the-premise network in 2005.

Knowledge Workforce

Mitchell employs more than 500 experts and technicians in locally expanding communications companies. Three communications engineering, consulting and software companies are located in Mitchell, South Dakota including CHR Solutions, Innovative Systems, and Vantage Point Solutions. Expansions at all three companies have added high quality, high paying jobs to Mitchell, improving the buying power of Mitchell residents and increasing the tax base for the city of Mitchell.

CHR Solutions, Innovative Systems, and Vantage Point Solutions helped create INS, SDN, and MEANS fiber networks that have made broadband possible in Iowa, South Dakota and Minnesota.

The fact that Mitchell's public K-12 education system, as well as a public two-year college and a four-year liberal arts university are located in the community, make Mitchell uniquely qualified to not only provide excellent educational opportunities for the families who live here, but also support to the many industries that operate from here. For instance, SDN Communications made a major investment in MTI by securing a \$20.6 million Broadband Technologies Opportunity Program grant. More than \$1 million of the money was designated specifically to provide state-of-the-art equipment and technology for use at the Mitchell Technical Institute in training students for careers in broadband applications and deployment. This state-of-the-art lab also provides for telecommunications professionals from the SDN Communications service area and beyond to come to Mitchell and MTI for hands-on training upgrades. Local engineering firms also assisted with the project.

The nearly seamless flow from elementary and secondary education to technical education to a university setting provide countless options for those living and working in Mitchell to acquire an education, upgrade skills, or pursue an advanced degree.

Digital Inclusion

The Mitchell School District provides high quality education on a personal basis for each of its K-12 students. Mitchell prides itself in innovative technology programs throughout the district. Grades 7-12 have been participating in a 1:1 laptop initiative since 2006. Each student is provided a laptop computer to use throughout the school year. In the fall of 2012, students in grades 7 and 8 moved from the traditional laptop computer to the Apple iPad due to the numerous and innovative educational applications, including many interactive textbooks, now available on that new technology. At the elementary schools, all classrooms are equipped with a SmartBoard. Teachers at all levels are infusing technology into their curriculum.

In addition, Mitchell Telecom provides local programming coverage of city council meetings and sporting events. Technology is not unique to the school system. The City of Mitchell also provides public wireless (WiFi) access in several locations including the public library, City Hall and the Corn Palace.

Innovation

Mitchell Telecom and Midcontinent Communications provide communications services including telephone, Internet, and cable television to Mitchell residents.

Midcontinent Communications partners with Connect2Compete, a national nonprofit organization bringing together leaders from communities, the private sector, and leading foundations. Through programs and the power of technology, Connect2Compete will improve the lives of Americans – regardless of their age, race, geography, income, or education level. The use of technology to access educational content is necessary to ensure future generations can compete in the global economy and to prepare them for the 21st century workforce.

Connect2Compete will help Americans access technology through three exciting offers: free digital literacy training, discounted high-speed Internet, and low-cost computers. To promote the work, Connect2Compete will create a national outreach campaign focused on the importance of technology to develop digital skills and find new opportunities.

Marketing and Advocacy

Mitchell was recently recognized as the South Dakota Community of the Year. The community is improving Mitchell's online presence and unique brand awareness with new websites and a community portal.

The acquisition of property along I-90 by Mitchell Area Development Corporation paid off in 2000 with the construction of a new Cabela's outdoor destination store and \$100 million in new I-90 commercial investment that changed the image of Mitchell and brought an updated, fresh presence to the interstate.

5. **Community as Canvas** (Maximum: 3 pages)

- a. **Culture as Art & Craftwork.** Provide an example of the direct contribution of the arts (visual, performing, musical, etc.) and craftwork to the city or region. The contribution may be in economic terms, in changing citizen perceptions of the community, in attracting and retaining employers and employees, or a combination of them all.

Over 1,000 years ago, roughly 200 Native Americans settled a village on the shore of Firesteel Creek near the James River at the 98th meridian. The architecture of their lodges – nearly eighty on the site – tells much about their relationship to climate: Their lodgings were designed to protect against the harshest elements and accommodate their families. They grew squash, beans and a domesticated type of corn from the Mexican valleys. However, they engineered a shortening of its growing season to mirror the short Plains summers in what is now Mitchell, South Dakota.

These Native Americans, perhaps ancestors of the North Dakota Mandan tribes encountered by the Corp of Discovery, learned to process bison on an industrial scale. In fact, trading pemmican – a type of trail mix made of bison bone marrow, seeds, and dried fruits – with passing fur traders was likely the area's first industry. Though the village was abandoned long ago, evidence of their heritage is being literally unearthed at the Prehistoric Indian Village on the shores of Lake Mitchell (the Firesteel Creek was impounded by an earthen dam as a part of a WPA public works project).

The Thomsen Center Archeodome is a fully enclosed, climate-controlled, live archeological dig site that hosts a team of archeologists for one month a year and invites visitors and students alike year-round. The 10,000-square-foot building encloses two full lodges on its exposed earthen floor. It includes a full laboratory, darkroom, computer classroom, and video conferencing studio. The Archeodome provides an enclosed archeological teaching and research facility, a feature rare in North America. The site is wired with full broadband access allowing for long-distance learning from the dig site.

This cultural gem provides a natural home for Native American art shows, concerts, games, speakers,

and classes. The opportunity to view live archeological work attracts thousands of visitors each year, from Boy Scout troops to families to local students. Modernizing a thousand-year-old village for twenty-first century audiences, literally building technology around the remains of those that came before us, exemplifies the contrary nature of those who settled the area long after the Mandan had left and the way two unique heritage groups now share the same space.

The contrast between two unique heritage groups is shown nowhere more clearly than at the Dakota Discovery Museum, located in Mitchell. There, three art galleries share one space: a rotating gallery featuring modern exhibits, the Charles Hargens installation showcasing his illustrative capture of the Old West, and the Oscar Howe Gallery, exhibiting works from one of the greatest Native American artists in American history.

Hargens' gallery captures a romantic view of Western culture in the region; where there are people, there is culture, and his work offers glimpses into the culture as it was being transformed by a new people upon the land. Oscar Howe's work is the penultimate result of a concurrent cultural exposure: his Native American heritage was informed by Western mores, creating the launch pad for beautiful art that has adorned both canvas and the Corn Palace where he was the artist in residence for over 20 years. In fact, a series of Oscar Howe murals on the interior of the Corn Palace depicts the story of the two cultures meeting at the 98th meridian.

These artistic gifts to, and of, the region reflected the local culture within itself and outward to the nation. Coastal cities were forced to recognize and grapple with the incredible art flowing from the region, and local citizens took pride in the images reflected back to them. It has been a regenerating gift in both economic and cultural terms. The galleries attract thousands of visitors each year, which leaves an economic impact on the city. The works themselves hang as a reminder of where have been both the good and the bad.

- b. Culture as Heritage. Provide an example of how your city or region's history and traditions have contributed to its progress as an Intelligent Community. How has today's development reflected the past or how has citizens' understanding of your heritage helped them accept and support change?

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In a land where the acres outnumber families, time and space have historically dictated societal norms in a way that encouraged sporadic mass gatherings in lieu of constant interaction. Festivals and fairs drew huge swaths of population from the countryside to communities, and came to be iconic of their host cities.

Mitchell is no exception. In 1892 local businessmen lobbied the community to build a Corn Palace to showcase the amazing agriculture and bring new faces to the city. The Corn Belt Exposition was born, and has been held each year since, now known as the Corn Palace Festival. Today, the Palace rising from the prairie pays tribute to the juxtaposition that has always characterized Mitchell.

In the years since the Corn Palace Exposition's conception, the structure itself has undergone renovation of both form and function. Used now year-round, the Palace is a community center, visitor attraction, city icon, and cultural feature combined. Over 300,000 visitors come each year to view the corn murals on the exterior of the building. The murals are replaced each year and reflect a new and changing theme. They are designed by an artist-in-residence and placed by hand on the building as the grasses and colored corn comes into season. This unique form of folk art constantly receives national attention and has been highlighted in numerous publications such as the National Geographic magazine.

- c. Culture as Attitude. Provide an example of common attitudes stemming from your history and traditions that support and accelerate progress on your Intelligent Community initiatives, as well as attitudes that represent an obstacle to progress, and how they are overcome.

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The climate in South Dakota dictates a strength of personal character. Only those with an untenable strength of will, would choose to stay in a place characterized by wild swings in weather, unpredictable seasons, and an unyieldingly flat landscape. This tenacity has created a population that overcomes barriers through persistence and determination.

As in many things, this strength comes with a specific set of challenges. Change does not come easily to those whose heritage is built on challenging nature. Acceptance of new ideas, new ways of thinking, and new technologies risk adoption along the slow curve of decades rather than the urban norm of years.

This grind to the top has the unexpected benefit of serving as a sieve for great initiatives. The citizens of Mitchell are savvy, civically engaged, and stubborn in a manner that ensures only the best ideas are implemented.

Key Contacts

6. Please provide contact information for a key public-sector, private-sector and nonprofit leader involved in your community's Intelligent Community programs.

Public-Sector Official

Name: Ken Tracy
 Title: Mayor
 Organization: City of Mitchell
 Telephone: 605-996-8420 Email: ktracy@cityofmitchell.org
 Contribution to the Community: Management of City & Public Leadership

Private-Sector Executive

Name: Roger Musick
 Title: CEO
 Organization: Innovative Systems
 Telephone: 605-995-6120 Email: rogerm@innovsys.com
 Contribution to the Community: Founder & ececutive of two (2) Mitchell Communications Companies

Nonprofit Executive

Name: Bryan Hisel
 Title: Executive Director
 Organization: Mitchell Area Development Corporation
 Telephone: 605-996-1140 Email: 605-996-8273
 Contribution to the Community: bhiselmadc@santel.net

7. Please provide the name and contact information for the person to be contacted by ICF in connection with this application.

Name: Bryan Hisel
 Title: Executive Director
 Organization: Mitchell Area Development Corporation
 Telephone: 605-996-1140 Fax: 605-996-8273

Email: bhiselmadc@santel.net

8. Please provide from your own press list up to 10 local and regional media (print, broadcast or online), including the publication's name, the name and title of an editor or reporter, and an email address.

Publication	Editor/Reporter	Email Address
Mitchell Daily Republic	Seth Tupper, Editor	stupper@mitchellrepublic.com
KMIT Radio	Billy Lurken, News Director	kmit@kmit.com
KORN Radio	J.P. Skelly, News Director	kornnews@kornq107.com
KELO Television	Beth Jensen	bjensen@keloland.com
KDLT Television	Paul Heinert	p_heinert@kdlt.com
KSFY Television	Kevin King	kking@ksfy.com
Sioux Falls Argus Leader	Sioux Falls Argus Leader	mkueter@argusleader.com

Ownership of Information

By submitting this information, the above-named community attests and acknowledges that:

- All information provided is accurate and fairly represents the past and current condition of the community to the best knowledge of the individual submitting the information.
- All information submitted to the ICF in connection with its international awards program becomes the property of the Intelligent Community Forum and will be used for the purposes of research, analysis and publication in pursuit of its global mission.

Intelligent Community Indicators

For a complete description of the Intelligent Community Indicators, visit www.intelligentcommunity.org and select "Intel Comm Indicators" on the Intelligent Communities menu.

1. **Broadband Connectivity.** Broadband is the new essential utility, as vital to economic growth as clean water and good roads. Intelligent Communities express a clear vision of their broadband future and craft policies to encourage deployment and adoption.
2. **Knowledge Workforce.** A knowledge workforce is a labor force that creates economic value through the acquisition, processing and use of information. Intelligent Communities exhibit the determination and demonstrated ability to develop a workforce qualified to perform knowledge work from the factory floor to the research lab, and from the construction site to the call center or Web design studio.
3. **Innovation.** Intelligent Communities work to build the local innovation capacity of new companies, because these produce all of the job growth in modern economies, and invest in e-government programs that reduce their costs while delivering services on the anywhere-anytime basis that digitally savvy citizens expect.
4. **Digital Inclusion.** As broadband deploys widely through a community, there is serious risk that it will worsen the exclusion of people who already play a peripheral role in the economy and society, whether due to poverty, lack of skills, prejudice or geography. Intelligent Communities promote digital inclusion by creating policies and funding programs that provide "have-nots" with access to digital technology and broadband, by providing skills training and by promoting a compelling vision of the benefits that the broadband economy.

5. **Marketing and Advocacy.** Like businesses facing greater global competition, communities must work harder than ever to communicate their advantages and explain how they are maintaining or improving their position as wonderful places to live, work and build a growth business. Effective marketing shares this story with the world, while advocacy builds a new vision of the community from within.

Success Factors

In evaluating nominations, ICF looks for trends that characterize successful Intelligent Communities. We suggest that, where appropriate, your nomination refer to the following success factors in describing your strategy and results.

Collaboration. The development of an Intelligent Community typically requires intense collaboration among government, businesses, universities and institutions. Few organizations have enough resources, political capital or public backing to drive a community-wide transformation. But collaboration is challenging. It demands vision, flexibility, and a high degree of trust among the partners. Intelligent Communities develop the vision, find the flexibility and create trusting relationships among key constituencies. Effective collaboration is typically the result of the working environment created by effective leaders.

Leadership. It is fair to say that no Intelligent Community has succeeded without strong leadership. Effective leaders identify challenges, set priorities, communicate a compelling vision and foster a sense of urgency in achieving it. They establish a collaborative environment that encourages risk-taking and creates win-win relationships with partners in government, businesses and institutions. It matters little where leadership comes from. In the Intelligent Communities that ICF has studied, leadership has emerged from elected officials, government employees, business executives, universities and nonprofit organizations. What matters is the character, motivation and talents of the individuals who commit themselves to improving the economic and social wellbeing of the community.

Sustainability. When Intelligent Communities invest in broadband, workforce development, digital inclusion, innovation and marketing, they work to create programs that sustain themselves through local service revenue, growth of the tax base, and the attraction of long-term investment. They avoid depending on short-term funding that fails to lay a foundation for the future, or that is subject to changing political priorities. They also plan their growth in order maintain quality of life while creating jobs and spurring business growth. They craft policies on land use, building codes, transportation, rights-of-way and other infrastructure to ensure the community remains a desirable place to live and work. They also use technology to reduce dependence on physical infrastructure, allowing more citizens to share the same community resources.