

Contact:
John Grubb
Vice President, Communications
Bay Area Council
415-946-8705
Cell: 415-847-6320
jgrubb@bayareacouncil.org



BAY AREA RESIDENTS RAPIDLY SWITCHING TO HIGH-SPEED DSL; ALL COMMUNITIES WANT WIRELESS INTERNET NETWORK, ACCORDING TO NEW POLL

Prefer a Bay Area-Wide Wireless Network, Rather Than City or County Systems

“Digital Divide” Unfortunately Thriving

SAN FRANCISCO, March 5, 2007 — Bay Area residents are spending more time online and the majority are now using high-speed DSL to do so, according to results of the 2007 *Bay Area Council Poll* of 600 residents released today.

In 1999, the average number of hours residents estimated they spent online per week was 11 hours, but that estimate has steadily increased to 16 hours in 2007. San Francisco residents spend the most time online, averaging 18 hours a week, and North Bay residents of Marin, Sonoma, Napa and Solano spend 13 hours online each week, the least amount in the region.

Residents have also been trading up on their connection speeds in their homes, outpacing the rest of the United States. Just five years ago, in 2002, 53 percent of residents with Internet access logged onto with a regular modem, but today modems are used by a mere 11 percent of residents. Instead, the majority (55 percent) now use high-speed DSL, and about another third (29 percent) log on with high speed cable at their home. The Bay Area, as a region, is far ahead of the rest of the country in broadband access, with a 62 percent adoption rate, versus 42 percent of the total U.S. population in 2006 according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

While hours online and connection speeds have increased, the number of residents who use a personal computer has stayed relatively flat. In 1999, 79 percent of respondents used a PC either at home, work or at school, and today 81 percent report that they do.

A new trend in the Bay Area is exploring providing free wireless internet access, which many cities and counties throughout the region are investigating. Eighty-two percent of residents favor building these networks. Rather than their individual city or county building their own wireless Internet network though (supported by 28 percent of respondents), residents would prefer the entire Bay Area build a single region-wide wireless system (supported by 52 percent of respondents).

“In the technology capital of the world, we must use wireless internet access to finally unite us and smash through our arbitrary borders, rather than divide us with even more patchwork systems,” said Jim Wunderman the president and CEO of the Bay Area Council. “The internet is a proven agent of positive social change, but only if it reaches everyone in our society.”

The “Digital Divide” was apparent in the *Bay Area Council Poll* results. While 97 percent of those with an income greater than \$80,000 regularly use a computer, only 62 percent of respondents with

an income lower than \$40,000 use a PC. Likewise, 95 percent of residents in the top income bracket access the Internet, but only 52 percent of those with an income less than \$40,000 do so.

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About the Bay Area Poll

A total of 600 residents of the nine-county Bay Area were surveyed in English and Spanish by Field Research Corporation during the period of January 8-14, 2007. Survey respondents were selected using a random probability sampling technique that gives all residents with telephones (listed or not) an equal chance of being selected for the survey. The sample was stratified to obtain representative samples in each of six Bay Area regions: Alameda County, Contra Costa County, San Francisco County, San Mateo County, Santa Clara County and the North Bay counties of Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma. After the completion of interviewing, the sample was weighted to conform to actual population estimates of the nine-county Bay Area. Findings are subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 4 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

About the Bay Area Council

Founded in 1945, the Bay Area Council (www.bayareacouncil.org) develops and drives regional public policy initiatives and researches critical infrastructure issues. Led by CEOs, the Bay Area Council presents a strong, united voice for hundreds of major employers throughout the Bay Area region whom employ more than 501,000 workers, or 1 of every six private sector employees in the Bay Area.