

Orange Farm ICT Hub relocates, expands

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The Orange Farm ICT Hub will relocate to the Orange Farm Cultural Centre from its previous location, the Orange Farm Library complex, to accommodate more PCs and cater for more people from the local community.

The ICT hub, sponsored by the Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC), the CSIR and the City of Johannesburg, was launched in July 2004.

The ICT hub aims to grow the economy of Orange Farm - community members use the hub to run their businesses, says Douglas Cohen, project consultant for the city's ICT sector support programme.

The hub was built as part of four projects planned by the ICT sector support programme. It has provided local small and medium enterprises, entrepreneurs and students with IT skills and business services, he says.

"It also provides business advice and business-related services to other businesses in the area," says Cohen.

He is appealing to Gauteng businesses to support the hub by outsourcing their desktop publishing requirements, including the designing of business cards and pamphlets, to the hub.

The CSC donated R100 000 towards the hub to equip it with furniture, including computers, printers, telephones, fax machines, photocopiers and related equipment. The CSIR IT centre is responsible for the skills training at the centre. It has trained 12 local community members in IT skills.

Future plans

Internet Solutions plans to use the centre as a test site for wireless voice over IP. The wireless technology will provide connectivity to other community centres located within the area.

"The future of this project is even more exciting with the potential wireless connectivity will bring. We will include a voice over IP telecentre to provide cheaper calls for the community and even free calls to linked satellites of the hub, such as clinics, businesses and schools," says Cohen.

Orange Farm, situated south of Johannesburg, is one of the largest informal settlements in the country.

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