Ericsson Internet Community award (ERICA) web site to serve as a global hub for non-profit community building

Information on how non-profit organizations can more effectively use and benefit from the power of Internet communications is one of the primary services offered on the Web site for the international Ericsson Internet Community Award (ERICA) program.

The ERICA, announced today, is the first-ever international awards program to provide funding and technology support for new ideas that help charitable non-profit organizations use Internet technology to strengthen their constituency-building efforts. ERICA is sponsored by Ericsson, a global leader in voice and data communications. (See separate release.) A critical component of this award program is the ERICA Web site http://www.ericsson.com/erica, which has been designed as an information exchange forum through which the global non-profit community can learn how to better take advantage of Internet technology, an arena that typically has been overlooked by many non-profit organizations.

"The ERICA Web site is going to be far more than a clearinghouse for information, entry submissions and status reports on the ERICA program," said Donna Campbell, director of Ericsson's CyberLab East, an Internet business division in New York that will organize and oversee the design, development and implementation of the program's winning concepts. "Given the resources we have put behind it, this site promises to become a very exciting, interactive global colloquium that can help non-profit organizations learn how to use Internet technology more aggressively to achieve their objectives and reach their constituencies."

Created expressly for the ERICA program, the ERICA Web site serves four primary functions:

• Centerpiece for all information, rules, entry forms, submissions, proposal reviews and award information for the ERICA;

• Information and best practices repository on community building and Internet technology, as specifically related to non-profit issues and needs;

• Discussion forum devoted to the exchange of ideas and advice for using technology to enhance constituency relations and service delivery;

• Venue for accessing perspectives on combining Internet technology and marketing from some of the most forward-thinking and visionary leaders in the field.

"The value of the ERICA site will last far beyond the announcement of the winning concepts this May," Campbell explained. "Non-profit organizations can now tap into a dynamic, ongoing resource on community building and the use of technology, tailored specifically for their needs."

Visitors can access daily news updates, subscribe to a weekly newsletter, and participate in a series of discussion forums.

"Importantly, visitors also will be able to benefit from technology communiques from experts on the ERICA Non-Profit Advisory Panel and judging panel, both of which include some of the most recognized technology luminaries of our time," Campbell added.

In addition to connecting the three communities brought together by the award program – non-profit advisors, commercial Internet companies and Web development partners – through logo and icon links, the ERICA Web site also will provide links to a comprehensive roster of third-party sources, libraries, resource guides and other Web sites dedicated to advancing the process of community-building through technology.

The ERICA will donate more than USD 250,000 in cash and in-kind Web development services to selected non-profit organizations that submit the most creative concepts for integrating Internet technology into community-building initiatives. The submission period runs from January 11 through March 31. Judging will be completed by May 15 and awards will be presented in New York City in June, 1999.

Official ERICA entry forms, guidelines and more information about the awards can be obtained at http://www.ericsson.com/erica or by writing to the ERICA, c/o Edelman Public Relations, 1200 Brickell Avenue, Suite 1270, Miami, Florida 33131.

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