



**Making the Information Superhighway Accessible to Ohio's Low-Income Communities**

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Ohio  
Community  
Computing  
Center  
Network

April 14, 1999

FCC MAIL ROOM

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William Kennard, Chairman  
Office of the Secretary of the FCC  
445 12th St. SW, Room TW-A325  
Washington DC, 20554

Attention: Ex parte filing in CC Docket # 98-141

Dear Chairman Kennard:

The Ohio Community Computing Center Network is writing in regard to the proposed Ameritech/SBC merger. OCCCN is a statewide membership organization of neighborhood computing centers. Our members work to ensure people in low-income communities have access to and training on computers and telecommunications technology.

OCCCN and many of its members got started in 1995 with funds provided by Ameritech in an alternative regulation case that was heard before the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio. These funds, \$2.2 million provided over three years, were just one condition placed on Ameritech in this case. Another condition included \$18 million for a school technology fund in which low-income school districts were given preference.

The \$2.2 million distributed by the OCCCN had a positive benefit in Ohio. We opened 14 community computing centers in seven Ohio cities. These centers provide training on computers and the Internet. They have evening and weekend hours, and all have open access times where people can come in and use the computers without being part of a more formal program. Last year, over 79,000 visits were made to OCCCN centers.

It is doubtful these centers would have opened without the Ameritech funding. As the FCC considers the current Ameritech/SBC merger, OCCCN encourages you to look at the benefits that come from including conditions to ensure low-income constituencies benefit from the merger.

Sincerely,

Ray Mulhern, Chairman, OCCCN Board of Directors

cc: Robert Atkinson, Deputy Chief of the Common Carrier Bureau  
Thomas Krattenmaker, Director of Research, Office of Plans and Policy  
Bill Dever, Room 5-C207

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