



Free Community Network Will Help Connect People, Information, and Ideas

January 14, 2009 – Mobile, Alabama – The Community Foundation of South Alabama announced today that it will use a three-year, \$169,005 grant from The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to create a community network to store knowledge and information for an eight-county region in Southwest Alabama.

“The Connect Southwest Alabama website will be a free community network that will help connect people, information, and ideas so we can better meet the needs of our residents,” said Ronald B. Melton, Chairman of The Community Foundation of South Alabama.

“At Knight Foundation, we firmly believe that you cannot effectively manage the affairs of a community in a democracy without the free flow of information. That’s why we believe that information is a core community need, as critical as any to a healthy community,” said Alberto Ibargüen, Knight Foundation president and CEO.

To create the network, partners from education, government and nonprofit organizations will help collect studies and research that impact the lives of everyone in our region. The goal is to bring members of the community and organizations closer together so the region’s problems can be solved.

The Connect Southwest Alabama network will provide citizens with a tool that will allow them to create and share information. The new website will feature reports, organization profiles and news that can be searched. Email groups and volunteer matching will encourage discussion and action to bring about positive change.

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Community meetings held in October showed promising support for a network that would enable the free exchange of ideas and information. The grant award from Knight Foundation has made it possible to begin construction of the community network.

The Community Foundation of South Alabama was one of 21 winners nation-wide in the Knight Community Information Challenge, a five-year, \$24 million initiative to help community foundations find creative ways to use media and technology to keep communities informed.

About The Community Foundation of South Alabama

The Community Foundation of South Alabama (CFSA) is a nonprofit foundation that plays a key role in meeting the needs of Southwest Alabama through leadership and grants. In 2008, more than \$3 million was awarded by the CFSA to nonprofit organizations to support programs that make life better in our community. The CFSA builds lasting endowments to ensure grants are available to support the community forever. For more information, visit www.communityendowment.com.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation invests in journalism excellence worldwide and in the vitality of U.S. communities where the Knight brothers owned newspapers. Knight Foundation focuses on projects with the potential to create transformational change. For more, visit www.knightfoundation.org.

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