

Annual Report – 2001

Athena Alliance

Kenan Patrick Jarboe, President

The purpose of Athena Alliance, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation located in Washington, DC, is research and public education on issues concerning the global information economy, with emphasis on communities left behind and communities at-risk.

Summary of Activities:

Last year, 2001, Athena Alliance began to get traction as a research and public education organization with the publication of two major reports and continued internal capacity building. Other activities included publishing articles, presentations, representing Athena at conferences, speeches and development of our website.

Major Activities:

During 2001, two major reports were issued, one each on our two major thrusts: local economic development and national policy analysis.

Local economic development was the focus of our spring activities. During that time, we finished a research project funded by a grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The project's research report, *Knowledge Management as an Economic Development Strategy*, was delivered to EDA in April, 2001. The report discusses the nature of economic development in the information economy. It goes on to explore Knowledge Management as a set of techniques and tools to be used by economic development practitioners to uncover and utilize information and knowledge assets. This report will serve as the intellectual launch pad for our activities in local economic development.

The second report, *Inclusion in the Information Age: Re-framing the Debate*, focused on national policy issues. The report grew out of the 2000 conference "New IT – New Equity – New Economy." Both a summary and an elaboration and extension of ideas presented in that conference, it went beyond those discussions to incorporate new material and ideas. Thus, it is not simply a report of the conference; it is a description of the current situation.

The report first explores questions of the New Economy and the digital divide. It goes on to issues of access, governance and economic development. The report ends, not with recommendations, but with eight points of consideration:

- Point one – Focus on the transformation, not the technology;
- Point two – Review and coordinate efforts;
- Point three – Work to ensure that everyone has access to the technological infrastructure;

- Point four – Encourage and facilitate participation and involvement by all in the digital economy and information society;
- Point five – Focus economic development on the Information Economy, not the Internet Economy;
- Point six – We need a better understanding of what is going on;
- Point seven – The decision making process must be open;
- Point eight – Innovate and experiment.

Both full and executive summary versions of the report were widely distributed. A short policy paper based on the points of consideration was also distributed to all Members of Congress.

At year-end, plans were underway for the creation of a follow-up report on specific policy actions based upon the short paper, *Crafting a Stimulus Package for the Information Age* (see below). That policy report, *Extending the Information Revolution*, was released in early February 2002.

Other publications:

During 2001, I also wrote the following papers (published on our website):

Taking Advantage of the Global Marketplace Using Local Information Assets, May, 2001
(based on National Economic Development Forum presentation)

Crafting a Stimulus Package for the Information Age, October, 2001
(also distributed to select Congressional staff and Members of Congress)

After Doha: What The WTO Is Not Talking About, November, 2001

Also posted on the website was “Five Thoughts on . . . The Digital Divide,” Interview with *Darwin Magazine*, September 13, 2001

Presentations:

Based on our research activities, I made a number of presentations in 2001:

“What is the Digital Divide?,” East of the River Technology Collaborative (ERTECH) and DC Agenda on *Bridging the Digital Divide through Effective Public Policy*, February 28, 2001.

“Overview of Information Technology Policy Issues,” Howard University *Digital Divide* conference (held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education {NAFEO}) March 23, 2001.

“Taking Advantage of the Global Marketplace,” National Economic Development Forum, *Partnerships for the 21st Century*, May 30, 2001

“Technology Policy Issues,” Electronic Data Systems (EDS) and Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) second annual Digital Divide Conference, October 8, 2001.

“Extending the Information Revolution,” *Digital Democracy: Civic Engagement in the 21st Century*, National Civic League’s 107th National Conference of Governance, November 16, 2001

I was also scheduled to make a presentation on “Economic Development and the Digital Divide” at the CUED 2001 Annual Conference in Philadelphia on September 11. (I was unable to attend.)

Other activities

During 2001, I also engaged in a number of other activities on behalf of Athena Alliance:

Attended conference on the Information Commons sponsored by Duke University and Center for Public Domain, November 9 – 11.

Served on the Digital Empowerment steering committee of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR); we worked to continue funding for both the Commerce Department’s Technology Opportunities Program (TOPS) and the Department of Education for Community Technology Centers (CTCs); activities included signing a letter to Congress urging full funding for the TOPS program.

Served on the planning committee for the March, 2001 Howard University/NAFEO Digital Divide conference.

Attended numerous Washington DC briefings and policy meetings.

Internal Activities

During 2001, our web site was re-designed and upgraded. We also refined our logo. In addition, with the publication of the *Inclusion* report (and the February 2002 whitepaper), we have developed a consistent report design in keeping with our logo and letterhead design. This report design will serve as the template for future reports.