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MEDIA RELEASE

The Discovering Technology Fair (The Discotech) Presents Opportunities for Digital Inclusion in DC

WASHINGTON, DC (November 8, 2011) – OCTO participated in the first citywide Discovering Technology Fair organized by the Broadband Bridge. This free event was held on Saturday, November 5, 2011 from 12:00 p.m. through 5:00 p.m. at Bread for the City's Northwest Center (1525 7th Street NW, Washington, DC). The purpose of this event was to teach people about the ways technology can improve their lives. This event also afforded an opportunity for local participants to learn how local communities can be impacted through the combination of public policy and Internet technology. In addition to computer training workshops for users of all skill levels, there were presentations on robotics, mobile apps, community wireless network-building, and Internet radio programs.

This event was a great opportunity for **Connect.DC, OCTO's Digital Inclusion Initiative program**, to discuss efforts to bridge the digital divide in the city. The participation of OCTO allowed the event attendees to gain a better understanding of how the District of Columbia Government is involved in digital inclusion and what it is doing to ensure that every District resident has the access to computers and broadband Internet service that is necessary to fully participate in 21st century society.

The audience at the technology fair was extremely diverse with respect to age, race/ethnicity, education, computer knowledge, and residence. The primary audience was people who do not have meaningful access to computers and technology. There were also opportunities to interact with "people who wanted to learn more about what the District government is doing to ensure its residents have access to computing technology, as well as people who are currently involved in technology initiatives," said Delano Squires, an outreach coordinator for the Connect.DC Digital Inclusion Initiative.

And Charles C. Holt, Jr., also an outreach coordinator for Connect.DC, added, “The audience was genuinely interested in gaining information. There seemed to be no hesitancy in asking questions, making requests or seeking advice. It is very apparent that most people want to know more when it comes to digital inclusion, no matter what their current level of expertise is.”

The event was overwhelmingly positive and it provided OCTO with a great opportunity to take the message of digital inclusion directly to the community. It also gave members of the community an opportunity to learn more about technology-related programs in the District, as well as throughout the region. Attendees seemed enthusiastic to learn about various ways technology could better their lives.

Going forward, District of Columbia residents, as well as private entities, will expect OCTO to continue participating in events such as this. It depicts the concern and the willingness to serve in the quest to assist in the advancement of the District of Columbia and OCTO’s place is becoming more apparent. The citizens of the District of Columbia have a sincere need to learn how their local government will be playing a role in the digital society. OCTO’s Digital Inclusion Initiative could not have been timelier, as the District citizens expect their local government to play a major role in any area that affects this city and its residents. “We are effectively fulfilling an integral part of Mayor Vincent Gray’s vision of One City highlighted in his State of District Address of 2011.” Said Alex Chi, Digital Inclusion Initiative program manager. OCTO has to become the point of reference that our citizens look to first for answers to their questions regarding digital inclusion.

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