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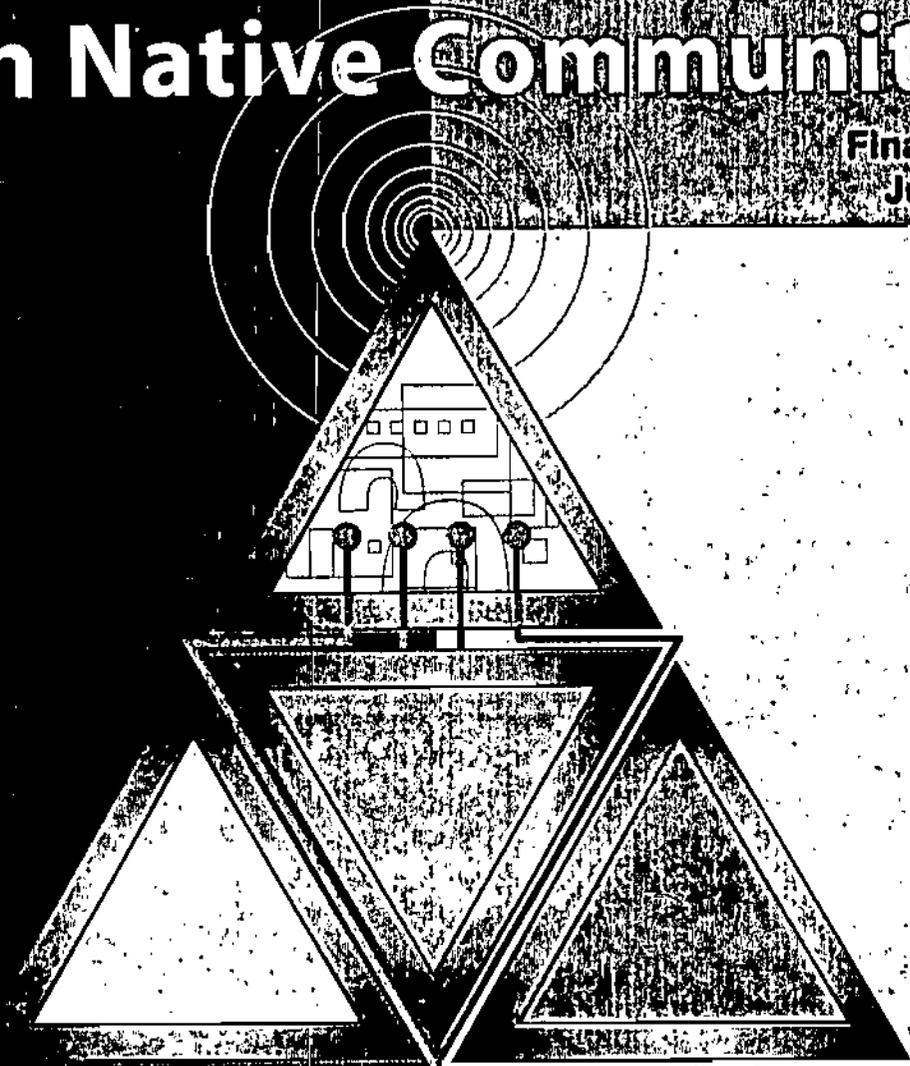
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Assessment of Technology Infrastructure in Native Communities

Final Report
June 1999



Prepared by
College of Engineering
New Mexico State University

Prepared for
Economic Development Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce



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Economic Development Digest

A monthly report for
 the economic development community
 Volume 12, Number 2
 November 2000
 A publication of the
 National Association of Development
 Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation
<http://www.nado.org/journals/digest.htm>

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS AN ECONOMIC TOOL

Entrepreneurship is the act of applying creative thinking to small business, discovering new ways to improve the operations of an existing or new business idea. Entrepreneurs look at what is needed, what is missing, what is changing, what can be done better, and what consumers will want to buy in the coming years.

In the US, there are 600,000 to 800,000 new companies created annually, which is a birthrate of 14 to 16 start-ups for every 100 existing businesses. It is possible that another two million businesses are started each year as self-employment ventures or as businesses with no employees. As many as 8.4 out of every 100 Americans — 16 million people — are currently attempting to start businesses of their own. Women are very involved in entrepreneurship activities, accounting for more than a third of all start-ups.

And small businesses create the majority of new jobs: 1.6 million, or 64 percent, of the 2.5 million jobs created in the US in 1996, for example. Since 1980, Fortune 500 companies have lost five million jobs, while the US as a whole has added 34 million jobs. According to the Small Business Administration (SBA), small businesses also typically provide most initial on-the-job training. They are also more likely to employ both younger and older workers, former welfare recipients, and women, many of whom may prefer or are able only to work part-time.

RURAL AND URBAN

A report by SBA, entitled *Rural and Urban Areas by Firm Size: 1990-1995*, investigates the differences between rural and urban areas in terms of the number and size of companies. Small businesses dominate rural areas; however, the growth of urban small and large firms outpaces that of rural firms. To illustrate, only 19.1 percent of all business locations and 15.3 percent of employees were in rural areas in 1995. Yet small firms represented 90.6 percent of rural business locations and 60 percent of rural private employment in 1995. Small firms' importance relative to urban areas is demonstrated by these statistics. Western states reported the highest growth in business locations and employment.

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