



JRI news release

May 10, 2001

The Japan Research Institute, Limited

**Announcing the Establishment of the
Saitama e-Community Project Committee
— Improvement in life convenience of local residents and
construction of a business infrastructure using IT —**

[1] The Japan Research Institute, Limited ("JRI"; Headquarters: 16 Ichiban-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo; President: Masahiko Koido) and 8 leading companies from various sectors of industry based in Saitama Prefecture, will formally establish the "Saitama e-Community Project Committee", whose purpose is to conduct research, preparatory to the implementation of the "Local Community Portal Site — Saitama e-Community" (provisional name), a project for the improvement in life convenience of local residents and for the construction of an infrastructure to promote the use of IT in the local community. The consortium will hold an establishment general meeting at the Urawa Royal Pines Hotel at 15:00 on May 10.

[2] Saitama e-Community Project Committee will start with nine companies; The Asahi Bank, NHK Saitama Station, The Shinyo-Kinko of Saitama-ken, The Saitama Shimbun, Seibu Railway, Television Saitama, Tobu Railway, The Musashino Bank and JRI. The committee will call for more participants in the committee, and designs to take further examination with about 30 companies eventually.

[3] Promoting the positive cooperation with organizations and business in the local community, such as local chambers of commerce and industry, the consortium provides information and services suitable for a local community portal site, with a view to creating a neutral and interactive site that allows local residents' participation.

[4] The Project Committee will consist of three subcommittees; a "Contents Subcommittee" considers the content of information services to be provided, an "Implementation Subcommittee" is in charge of the feasibility and the structure of organizations of the project, and a "System Subcommittee" consider what kind of systems and distribution channels should be used in realization of the project.

[5] JRI takes charge of the general secretariat of the Project Committee and the secretariat of the System Subcommittee, and also shares the responsibility for the secretariats of the Contents Subcommittee and Implementation Subcommittee respectively with Marketing Junction and with Mitsubishi Corp.

[6] With the aim of improving in life convenience of local residents, the consortium provides an environment in which local residents can use media easy to access, such as mobile phones and cable TV, as well as personal computers. The wide variety of information provided through those media, are reservation services, business hours of major facilities of both private- and public-sector, such as information on consultation hours at hospitals. The consortium also aims to contribute to promoting the use of IT by local residents and businesses, which is to create a prosperous environment with stronger ties between virtual (on-line) and real (actual stores) spaces.

[7] In consideration of the structure of Saitama Prefecture, which is largely made up of the urban centers of Omiya and Urawa city and other neighbouring areas with a large proportion of residents commuting to schools and companies in Tokyo by rail, the project feasibility will be considered from two parts; the area sites focusing on newly formed Saitama city as a core, and the railway line sites which are classified with each railway station of local lines.

[8] The Project Committee schedules to complete the examination of the content of services to be offered and of the feasibility of the project by the end of September 2001, and begins to design specific operation plans from October 2001. In preparation for the implementation, the project will conduct questionnaire or interview surveys to local businesses and residents to meet the local needs.

[9] In conjunction with the building of the portal site, it will be vital to coordinate with system vendors or with content providers who can provide information on matters outside the local community. To this end, the consortium will collaborate with e-Community Consortium 2001, a neutral consortium organized separately from JRI, and will recruit businesses that provide more functions which would be needed in future.

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