

And the Awards Go to Vermont Interactive Television

If you ask Tara Lidstone, Executive Director of Vermont Interactive Television (VIT), the history of the company she's worked for since 1992, she will proudly tell you "VIT is a typical Vermont story: we've done a lot with very little."

Vermont's largest videoconferencing network, VIT started in 1988 as a pilot program within the Vermont Technical College curriculum. At the time the idea was simple: provide the technical infrastructure and operational expertise with which Vermonters could easily connect to each other and the world. Since its inception, VIT has taken that seed of an idea and grown it into a thriving business that has gained the recognition of industry leaders.

Recently the pioneering company received two prestigious awards for excellence and innovation in the development and delivery of distance learning technology. In May, The United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) presented VIT with the 21st Century Award for Best Practices in Distance Learning.

When asked how VIT became nominated for such an award, Lidstone explained, "A case study was done and the industry leaders were impressed by what they saw ... a public system, serving all sectors of the state of Vermont... it's a really extensive and robust infrastructure, and the tech expertise is there as well... we're very unique."

The USDLA is not the only industry leader taking note of VIT's innovations and technical achievements. In June, the Computerworld Honors were handed out at a black-tie event in Washington DC. This annual event is the Olympics of technology, and Vermont's own VIT brought home the gold medal in the training and education category.

Computerworld began its search with 1000 original candidates, both businesses and organizations from all over the globe, and in the end they chose to recognize just 250 participants across a variety of categories.

From Computerworld's website: **"The 2011 Computerworld Honors Program recognizes those organizations which create and use information technology to promote and advance the public welfare, benefit society and change the world for the better."**

Although Lidstone and the staff of VIT are grateful for the well-deserved recognition and proud of the fact their pioneering methods have the ability to change the world for the better, their main focus remains what it has always been: supporting the economic health and development of Vermont and providing Vermonters with advanced technology and expertise so that they may have access to higher education, grow their businesses and stay connected.