FACTSHEET: Community Portals

Search the Internet for information about many of Chicago’s neighborhoods and it can be hard to find much at all—and what is available is likely to be a standard crime story. Yet every community has many untold positive stories, from a winning season by the high school football team to a resident who has opened a new store. To get a full picture of the five Smart Communities, visit their community portals.

A community portal is a website dedicated to a specific neighborhood, with news, a calendar of local events, a directory, photos, videos and more, all generated by local residents, businesses, nonprofits and other institutions. Moderated by a portal manager who maintains a lively, broad mix of local content, each portal is a place for residents to both learn the latest about their community and to tell their stories to the world.

The five sites are: auburngreshamportal.org; chicagolawnportal.org; englewoodportal.org; humboldtparkportal.org; and pilsenportal.org.

Community information, by and for the community
Community portals are different from the websites of traditional neighborhood nonprofits because they cover a wide set of topics from many points of view. It’s like a community newspaper, bulletin board and phonebook—all in one place, created by the residents themselves.

All five of the portals are built on a common software platform, providing powerful features that allow each portal to be modified for the needs of the community. Each includes:

- **News** that covers everything from an art gallery opening to homeowner tax credits, including first-person opinion, slideshows, videos and more.

- **Directories** that give businesses, social service agencies, schools and other institutions an online presence. A listing can include photos, video, a map, hours of operation, a menu—anything to help a reader learn more.

- **Events and listings** on a calendar of what’s going on in the community.

- **Other information** that the local community has deemed important—job listings, video profiles, a virtual neighborhood tour, news from the alderman’s office, technology tips, etc.

**News you can use**
The Pilsen Portal opened in the summer of 2009, and the Humboldt Park Portal launched a year later. The three partner communities in the Southwest Smart Communities Initiative—Auburn Gresham, Chicago Lawn and Englewood—launched their portals in the Fall of 2010, and those three sites are linked together to help build a stronger Southwest Side.

*(turn over for more)*
The portals are open for submissions from anyone, and by becoming a member, contributors are able to do even more, including designing and editing their entry. Trainings for getting the most from the portals are available in each of the Smart Communities.

**For more information**
Simply visit each portal to see what’s available or to contribute your own content. To learn more about the local portal, just contact the portal manager.

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Smart Communities  
The portals are part of the Smart Communities program, which works to ensure increased digital access and use for families, businesses and other institutions in five Chicago neighborhoods: Auburn Gresham, Chicago Lawn, Englewood, Humboldt Park and Pilsen. Funded through the federal Broadband Technology Opportunities Program and supported by LISC/Chicago, Smart Communities is part of the City of Chicago’s Digital Excellence Initiative and operated by key agencies in each of the communities.