



## **The Beacon Of Hope**

By Leon Dixon Jr.

Chairman Of Board

W.E.B. DuBois Center

A Beacon of Hope has been erected behind the W.E.B. DuBois Learning (DLC) center that towers 190 feet into the sky. The significance of this tower is that it enables various satellites in the community to access the internet and software at the DLC by taking advantage of wireless technology.

In effect, this is a network that establishes a telecommunications hub at the DLC. This project began with a grant from General Election Corporation to upgrade the computer facility. In the summer of 2000, Sprint awarded the DLC a grant of \$100,000 to support the Telehub project.

Several area students were trained by certified electrician's at the DLC to install and terminate networking cable in three churches along the Swope Parkway corridor: Swope Parkway Church of Christ; St. Louis Catholic church and Covenant Presbyterian church. An antenna was placed atop the DLC that allowed data terminals in these satellite (churches) to utilize the equipment and services provided by the DLC, and the Microsoft Corporation contributed more than \$100,000 in software to help fulfill the vision.

The satellites could operate their educational, and other, programs at their sites without having to constantly upgrade and maintain the state-of-the-art hardware and software being utilized.

More community centers and churches in other areas of our community began expressing an interest in participating in the Telehub Project. The interest necessitated the building of the tower in order for them to be serviced. The DLC was awarded a \$300,00 grant by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) in 2001 that helped us include more sites in our network. This enabled the DLC to erect the tower. When the community heard about the efforts, they rallied to our support and began referring to the tower as, "The Beacon of Hope".

Since the awarding of the DOE grant, two more sites along the Swope Corridor have been included in the DLC network, Swope Park United Christian church and the Bridge

Home. Several other sites have also been wired (by area students), and will be brought-on-line as soon as the final touches have been added to "The Beacon of Hope".

These sites are, the Greater Corinthian Church of Christ, Metropolitan Missionary Baptist church, Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion church, Palestine Senior Citizens center, and Shalom Missionary Baptist church.

In addition to this, a Cisco Academy has also been established at the DLC and adult computer classes are being taught, along with the student classes, at several of the satellites. And a recent grant from SBC has helped make great strides in fulfilling the vision statement of "Creating Giant Steps Together".