



● ACCESS: John Cowles, the network's chairman, is helping ICT firms

Digital dream boosted by funding win

THE Digital Peninsula Network, the support network for Cornish digital businesses, has clinched a £530,000 Objective One grant as it looks set to expand its range of services.

The agency, based in Penzance, supports a group of over 220 creative, knowledge and IT businesses in West Cornwall.

The network's digital facility centre in Penzance will have its facilities upgraded, with new equipment and software that members most require.

It will also offer members extremely high speed broadband, remote access to e-mail, plus improved online and onsite training and meeting facilities.

John Cowles, chairman of Digital Peninsula Network, said: "More and more skilled individuals and companies are relocating or returning to Cornwall as the ability to work anywhere makes this possible.

"Now Cornwall has broadband, it is becoming a fantastic location for digital businesses. For those of us already here, our geographical remoteness is finally becoming less of a barrier."

New and existing members will be helped to work together to gain major contracts from national and international clients.

An impressive range of businesses have already benefited from the network. They include website designers, new media companies, consultants,

By Graeme Demianyk

photographers, film makers, IT support businesses and digital artists.

Many have international contracts and work remotely for major UK organisations.

"We are extremely grateful to the South West Regional Development Agency and to Penwith District Council for vigorously supporting our bid.

"They and other funding partners, including BT, have recognised that Cornwall's economic future lies in new technology and the development of fast moving and flexible small businesses that can exploit it.

"Our aim has always been to make Cornwall the 'digital peninsula.' Now that dream is becoming a reality."

The network has also helped start up businesses, many run by people who were previously unemployed.

Stephen Bohane, Cornwall head of operations for the South West Regional Development Agency, said: "We are seeing the emergence of a cluster of growing businesses using ICT to overcome distance and demonstrate that West Cornwall can compete in a world market."

Membership costs start at only £5 per month. Anyone wanting to join the network should call 01736 333700.