

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Nic Millington – The Rural Media Company
01432 344039
nicm@ruralmedia.co.uk

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£330,000 to create a national Gypsy & Traveller web portal

The Rural Media Company has been awarded over £300,000 to create and manage the first dedicated educational web portal aimed at the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. The new on-line resource will also support public and voluntary sector agencies that provide services for these communities.

The Rural Media Company has been publishing the national magazine Travellers' Times for eight years from its headquarters in the centre of Hereford and which has built up an audience of over 100,000 readers. This strategic grant from the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) will enable the company to build upon the magazine's success and offer many new services over the next three years. These will include an on-line forum for young Travellers; a culture zone comprising archives, history and events calendar; a learning zone with teaching resources, case studies and a space where young Travellers can interact with teachers.

Increasingly young people are producing their own media content using camera phones, video cameras and laptops. Some of this activity takes place at school, but also outside school within more informal learning settings and of course at home. Young Gypsies and Travellers are no exception, and the Travellers' Times Portal will create a unique platform on which young Travellers can publish their creative work and communicate with national and international audiences.

Rural Media's Chief Executive, Nic Millington said, "Gypsies and Travellers are one of the most disadvantaged communities in England, suffering from lack of skills, information and a voice. Not only will the Travellers' Times Portal offer brand new on-line services but it will support the hundreds of small organisations that are delivering specialist services to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities."

Nic continued by saying that the media can play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards Gypsies and Travellers. He added, "Already we are often the first port of call for the media when they cover a Traveller story. The Travellers' Times Portal will play a key role in redressing negative stereotyping by providing authoritative and comprehensive information and links."

Recruitment is underway to put a new team in place to work alongside current Travellers' Times staff. Anyone wishing to know more about this major new project should contact Jane Jackson, Director of Production at The Rural Media Company on 01432 344039, or visit www.ruralmedia.co.uk

Release ends

Editorial notes:

1. The Rural Media Company works throughout the UK. It combines community and informal education, training and advocacy with the professional skills of the media industry. The results are effective, high-impact, high-quality media projects and educational materials at the cutting edge of current policy and debate. The Rural Media Company is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee (www.ruralmedia.co.uk).
2. The Rural Media Company receives support from the UK Film Council, Screen WM, Herefordshire Council and many other funders, trusts, foundations, charities and commissioning bodies.
3. Photograph of current (Spring 2008) cover of Travellers' Times enclosed with this release.
4. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (www.dfes.gov.uk) is one of three new government departments set up by the Prime Minister on 28 June 2007. The purpose of the Department is to make England the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up.