

NET

NET Fund for the Future

NET, also known as Northern Electronics Technologies, Inc., was an information technology company born in Devils Lake in the early 1980s. Local business-men/entrepreneurs Bill Gerrells, Bill Light, and Mel Bagne partnered to launch a business that would serve the rapidly growing regional market for personal computers. Their company, first known as Gerrells & Light, built customized, cutting-edge computers for individuals and businesses.

In the early 1990s, Jim Shanks and Larry Bosh joined the company, and eventually they partnered to purchase ownership shares. The company name was changed to NET (Northern Electronics Technologies, Inc.) and it achieved designation as a “Pride of Dakota” company. NET was a leading vendor of hardware, software, and peripherals throughout north central North Dakota. LRSC was a customer, outfitting classrooms with many NET computers.

From its start, the company faced challenges in meeting its workforce needs for skilled computer technicians. Graduates of LRSC’s Information Technologies program were frequently hired by Gerrells & Light/NET, Inc. To help assure excellence for students enrolled in LRSC’s IT program, the company donated a computer each year (from 1994 through 1999) to the college’s foundation. The machines were sold each year at the fund-raising gala known as the Key Event, and the proceeds were placed in an endowment known as NET Fund for the Future.

In the year 2000, NET, Inc. ceased operations due to consolidation within the industry which forced many smaller computer builders to close their doors. However, NET’s investment in information technologies educational opportunities at LRSC continues to do good work. Each year, the program’s advisory board meets with faculty to identify a project/program need to support with earnings from the NET Fund for the Future endowment. ■

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