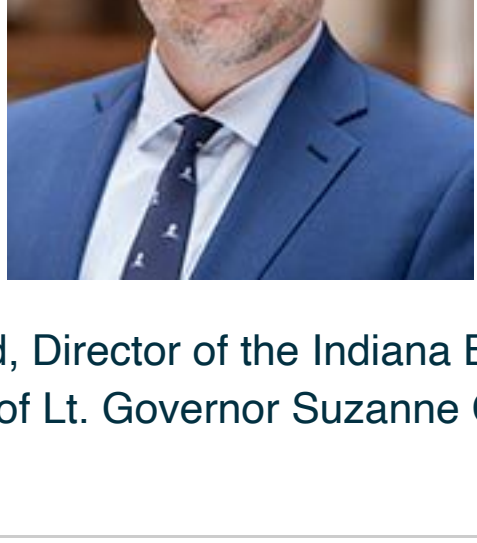


# INDIANA BROADBAND AUGUST NEWSLETTER

State of Indiana sent this bulletin at 08/23/2021 09:00 AM EDT



## FROM THE DESK OF...



Scott Rudd, Director of the Indiana Broadband Office of Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch

Labor Day is right around the corner, and with that, back-to-school season is in full swing. After one of the most unique school years in recent memory, the Indiana Broadband Office is prepared to help parents and students navigate this new school year along with the connectivity challenges that may occur.

The IBO stands ready to direct Hoosiers to the resources necessary for learning. Our office will continue to publish the monthly newsletter and update the website and social media with digital learning resources for students, kindergarten through college.

Last winter, with the help of numerous state and private partners, IBO created an interactive map showing locations providing free Wi-Fi across Indiana. These included local businesses, schools, libraries and more. As the fall semester begins, we will ask for your help to tell us new locations near you that can be added. The map can be accessed [here](#). We encourage communities and schools to place this link on their website and highlight it in social media posts.

The U.S. Department of Education also offers resources parents, students and teachers can utilize when navigating digital learning during the 2021-2022 school year. These resources can be found [here](#).

Finally, the IBO will continue to work with our partners at the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) to produce comprehensive broadband maps, provide updates on broadband infrastructure funds along with tracking broadband related legislation in Indiana and at the federal level.

Thank you for being continuous supporters of the IBO. We will continue to work hard for Hoosiers across the state.

## NEXT LEVEL CONNECTIONS: ROUND THREE.



Indiana's Next Level Connections Broadband Grant Program: Round Three is now open for applications!

The grant program, which seeks to bridge the digital divide by bringing high-quality, reliable broadband to unserved and underserved parts of Indiana, began as part of Gov. Holcomb's [Next Level Connections](#) initiative, a \$1 billion statewide infrastructure program announced in 2018.

The first two rounds of funding awarded \$78.95 million to 63 projects, for a total investment of \$155.12 million, when including the local matching funds. These previously awarded projects will bring broadband infrastructure to more than 22,401 homes, commercial locations, and anchor institutions, such as schools, universities, hospitals or major employers, in 44 counties.

"This latest round of grant funding builds on the historic investments Lt. Governor Crouch and I have made in our effort to foster connections for Hoosiers across the state," Gov. Holcomb said. "I encourage partners in counties that have yet to participate to consider applying for this nation-leading initiative."

This round will provide a maximum of \$5 million per grant to fund projects by telecommunications providers and utility cooperatives. Service providers must provide a minimum 20 percent match of the total allowable project costs.

Earlier this year, Gov. Holcomb signed HEA 1001, which dedicated another \$250 million for the Next Level Connections Broadband Grant program and other priorities.

Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch, along with the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, administers and oversees the program.

"Our Next Level Connections Broadband program has already helped get this critical 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure to unserved Hoosiers, but we know more work is still needed," Crouch said. "The significant investment made by the legislature and our administration will continue our efforts to close the digital divide as we connect individuals that make our schools, health clinics and communities stronger throughout Indiana."

Applications and more information can be found at [ocra.in.gov/nlc](#). Letters of intent must be submitted by 3 p.m. ET on Sept. 24, 2021.

To read the full press release, click [here](#).

Stay turned for future newsletters for additional NLC fundings resulting from the 2021 Legislative Session.

## INTRODUCING A NEW INDIANA BROADBAND OFFICE CAMPAIGN



Broadband is the vehicle that moves information at high speeds and allows every corner of the state to be digitally connected. The need for reliable broadband was put on display over the last year. We took this as an opportunity to educate communities and residents.

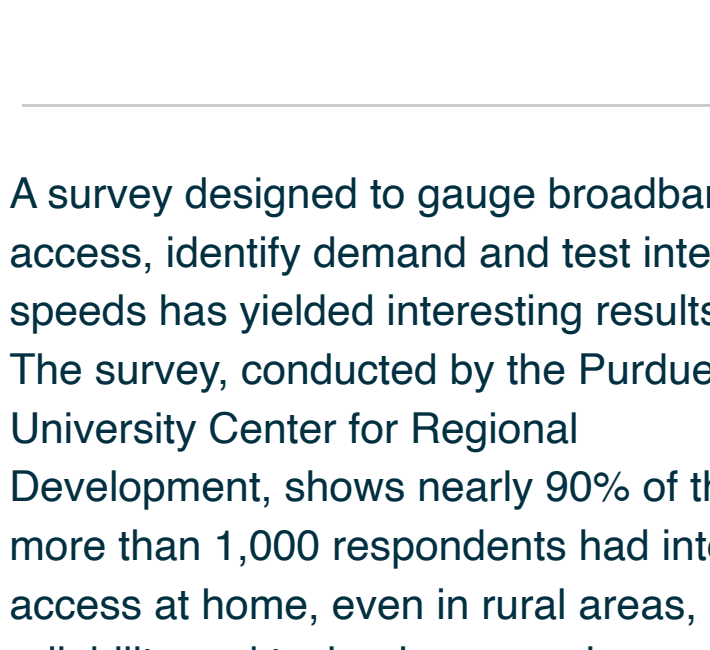
We are looking forward to the future of broadband. Communities are actively making strides toward advancement such as, the creation of task forces, communities becoming Broadband Ready, securing funding for infrastructure projects and spreading their reach. We want to take this time to focus on all the progress being made across the state of Indiana.

With that, we are excited to introduce, "Connect Indiana," a way for the Indiana Broadband Office to recognize and connect with communities that are paving the way for the future of broadband.

Nothing is more powerful than connections. We wish to meet Hoosiers where they live, work and play, as broadband touches all these aspects of life.

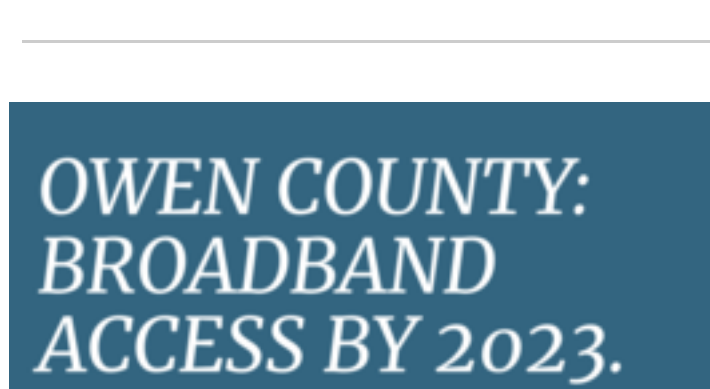
Check out our first few Connect Indiana posts below and follow us on social media to see more, every month.

### CONNECT INDIANA NEWS STORIES



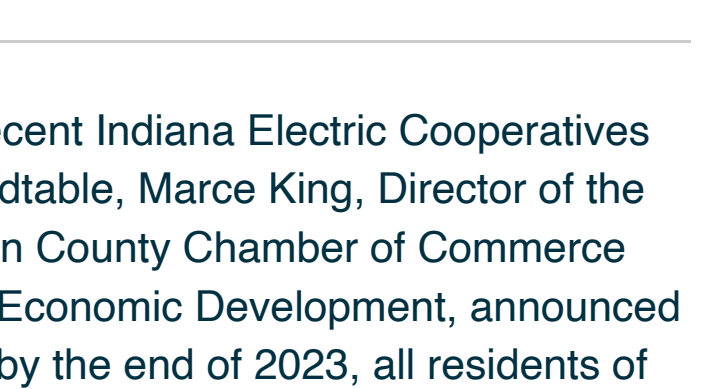
According to BroadbandNow, there are an estimated 666,000 Hoosiers who do not have access to a wired connection capable of 25 Mbps download speeds across the state, and an estimated 718,000 have access to just one wired internet service provider. Additionally, the study estimated 265,000 do not have access to an internet provider at all.

Read more [here](#).



At recent Indiana Electric Cooperatives roundtable, Marce King, Director of the Owen County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development, announced that by the end of 2023, all residents of Owen County should have access to broadband internet.

Read more [here](#).



A survey designed to gauge broadband access, identify demand and test internet speeds has yielded interesting results. The survey, conducted by the Purdue University Center for Regional Development, shows nearly 90% of the more than 1,000 respondents had internet access at home, even in rural areas, but reliability and technology remain a challenge.

Read more [here](#).

## UPDATES FROM THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



Lieutenant Governor Suzanne Crouch has used the Summer of 2021 to attend several Broadband Roundtable discussions across the state. During this tour, she met with county and other local leaders, along with stakeholders to discuss progress in Broadband as well as what challenges still exist. Her first stop was in Martinsville at South Central Indiana REMC, an electric cooperative serving rural Indiana. She also visited Paoli.

Additionally, this tour took Crouch to the Fort Wayne, South Bend and Hammond areas where she was present as leaders from Digital Crossroads and Vivacity Networks announced a partnership to create a Digital Crossroad Fiber Network as part of the Indiana Toll Road.

Follow along with the Lieutenant Governor as she travels across Indiana! Follow her on Facebook, [here](#).

Follow her on Twitter, [here](#).

## STEPS TO SUCCESS

### Playbook for Success

Is your community broadband ready? The Indiana Broadband Office is creating a top 10 list of best practices, the Indiana Broadband Playbook for Success. This playbook will outline steps your community can take to expand broadband connectivity and affordability in your area.

Every other Friday, the IBO shares another step of our Playbook for Success on social media. This playbook will outline steps communities can take to expand broadband connectivity and affordability.

This month we are highlighting Steps 7 & 8.

## STEPS TO SUCCESS.



### Step Seven

Having an inventory of public resources and assets will help providers interested in your area, eliminating much of the groundwork on their behalf.

- What are the vertical assets? (i.e. towers, grain silos, etc.)
- Is there any existing or unused fiber which could handle more traffic?
- Compile list of ordinances/permits/requirements for the submission process.
- Streamline the permit process and ensure rapid review of all submitted permits/applications.

### Step Eight

Data can be used in conversations with providers, grant applications and more. It is important to have reliable data at your fingertips.

- Map areas where service is needed.
- Use surveys to identify those served/unserved areas.

Identify areas eligible for federal, state, local and private funding.

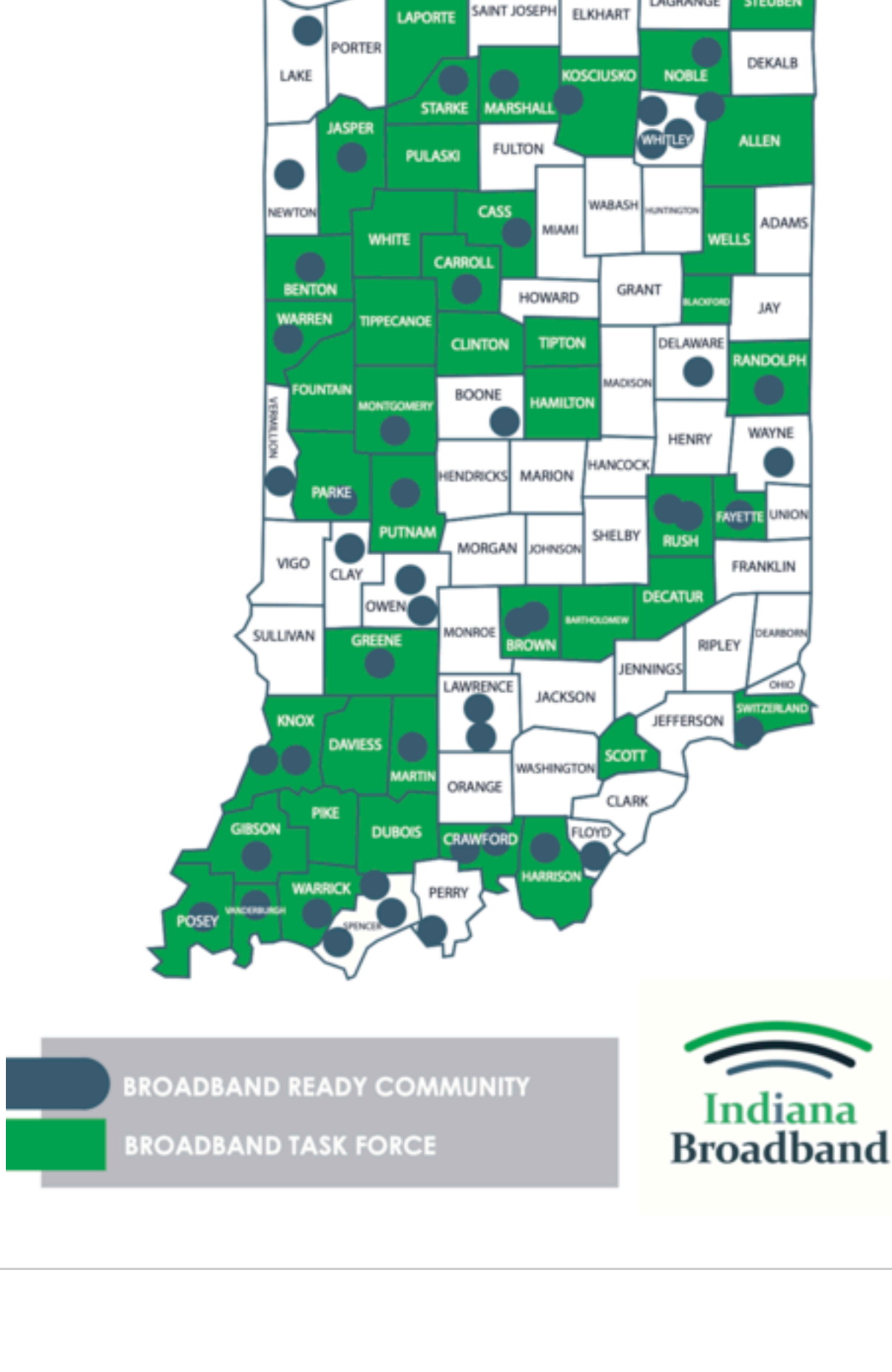
## BROADBAND READY COMMUNITIES

This summer, the Indiana Broadband Office has been actively engaging with communities that desire to become Broadband Ready. The Broadband Ready Communities Program is a designation signaling that community leadership is committed to the development of reliable and affordable internet.

To learn more about being a Broadband Ready Community, visit [here](#).

Our most recent Broadband Ready Community is the Town of Etna Green. Scott Rudd, Director of the Indiana Broadband Office, said, "Communities are passing Broadband Ready ordinances faster than ever." Stay tuned in the coming months as we look to announce additional Broadband Ready Communities, including our 50th community milestone.

The BBRC's are highlighted in the map below.



## COMING SOON!

Come back for our September newsletter to find updates on what our federal leaders are up to with current Infrastructure Planning.

We want to hear from you! Please send broadband-related news regarding your community or organization to the Indiana Broadband Office at [INbroadband@ig.in.gov](mailto:INbroadband@ig.in.gov), and we'll share on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or in this newsletter!



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