INDIANA BROADBAND APRIL NEWSLETTER

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Indiana Broadband
CONNECT INDIANA

FROM THE DESK OF...

Roberto Gallardo
Director of the Purdue Center for Regional Development
Acting Director, Next Level Broadband Connections

Fellow Hoosiers,

It is hard to believe that six months have gone by since I first joined the OCRA NLC team. During this time, we successfully administered the Next Level Connections Round 3 program and launched the brand new Indiana Connectivity Program. I learned so much from this experience and want to thank OCRA for the opportunity. I now return full-time to my faculty position at Purdue and directing the Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD). There are many things to understand, plans to develop and even more insights to share regarding the broadband landscape.

Allow me to share two of the latest efforts in which PCRD has been involved. The first is a first of its kind regional digital inclusion plan while the second is a study conducted by surveying more than 16,000 Indiana homes about their broadband access and experience.

The SIRPC Region digital inclusion plan is the first of its kind in Indiana. The plan is innovative not only because of the issue it is trying to address, but also because it frames digital inclusion as an economic/workforce development and quality of life issue. In addition, it focuses on more than broadband infrastructure. A Regional Digital Advisory Team or RDAT was formed spearheaded by SIRPC. This group, along with PCRD, drafted the plan over 10-12 months. The group relied on surveys and data to better understand the region's digital landscape. Once the plan was drafted, a series of County Digital Ambassadors was recruited. These ambassadors gathered public input from their communities for the plan, and are responsible for implementing the plan based on their county's resources and priorities, as well as identifying and mobilizing resources. SIRPC's digital fellow is playing a critical role in this process working closely with SIRPC and the county ambassadors. The plan will be implemented in the next five years and a series of metrics are available for communities to choose from depending on the goals/strategies they want to pursue.

The more than 16,000 surveys gathered as part of multiple broadband planning efforts highlight the issue of internet quality and affordability. Information on satisfaction, cost, technology used and willingness to pay among other variables was gathered. Survey data clearly showed that even areas considered served do not offer quality and affordable service. Consider that more than 88% of those surveyed said they had home internet service, but more than half were not satisfied due to service being too slow or unreliable. In addition, focusing solely on monthly cost can be misleading. Network capacity, measured with existing speeds, needs to be factored in by calculating the monthly cost per megabit per second (Mbps). Several key findings are discussed including increasing the eligibility speed to a minimum of 100/20 Mbps, giving communities more control or say on where and what networks to build, reconsider the issue of overbuilding, keep affordability in mind when building networks, and take advantage of the existing state broadband programs.

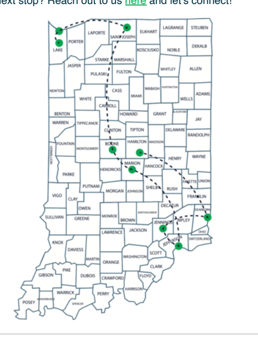
Thank you for welcoming me with open arms,

Roberto Gallardo, PhD
Director of the Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD)
Acting Director, Next Level Broadband Connections
Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA)

ON THE ROAD WITH IBO

Indiana Broadband has taken some exciting trips lately! Check out the map below and be on the lookout for your county!

Want to be the next stop? Reach out to us here and let's connect!



BROADBAND CHAMPIONS HIGHLIGHT

ICYMI! Our Broadband Champion program is launched! This exciting initiative focuses on YOU, the broadband champions.

Did you miss this month's exclusive first look on our Indiana Broadband Instagram TV? Follow us here and turn on notifications to never miss the early release.

Our most recent Broadband Champion was Marce King, Executive Director of the Owen County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development, and a true Broadband rockstar!

You'll learn so much, and be inspired, by watching the interview in which she discusses how the Broadband Ready Community designation was a game-changer for Owen County.

Watch Marce by clicking here.

Be on the lookout for our next Broadband Champion that will be released later this month! Do you have someone we should consider for an upcoming video? Email us at INbroadband@lg.in.gov to nominate your community's Broadband Champion!

CONNECT INDIANA

The Indiana Connectivity Program is an ongoing effort aimed to connect residents and businesses that lack access to broadband internet service with service providers and assists them in the expense of extending broadband to those locations.

To check the status of your application, click here.

Think you missed out? This is an **ongoing** program that seeks to close the digital divide and unite the State of Indiana. To learn more, click here.

INTRODUCING, THE WIFI PROJECT

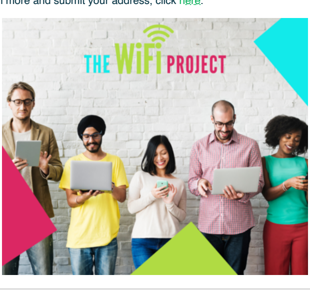
Hey, Hoosiers! Need connectivity?

You're in the right place!

The WiFi Project is an initiative of the state of Indiana with the goal of helping to find residents and business owners who need internet access and connecting them to providers and resources who may have a part in making it happen!

How is your connectivity? Do you need to level up your speed? Level up your business, level up your e-learning, level up your degree, level up your at-home doctor visits, level up your online gaming, level up your movie night, level up your CONNECTION!

To learn more and submit your address, click here.



BROADBAND READY COMMUNITIES

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, click here.

Stay tuned as we continue to work with communities across the state to become Broadband Ready! We have roughly 35 counties to go. Also, keep in mind that cities and towns may apply for the designation as well.

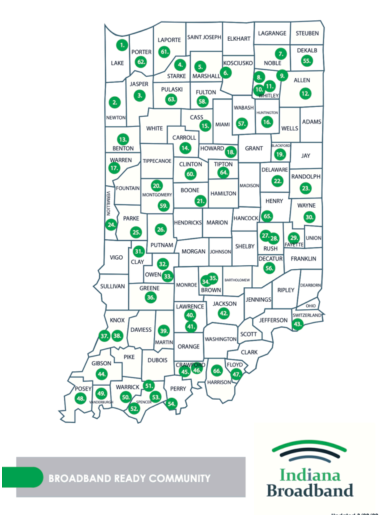
Congratulations to our most recent Broadband Ready Communities!

Town of Knightstown
"Knightstown has a unified vision to pave the way for providing broadband as a necessary social infrastructure for our community. Broadband access provides far reaching opportunity for improving the overall well-being of citizens as well as promotes economic development as a destination on the National Road," said Knightstown Town Council President Sarah Ward. "We want to do our part in lessening the broadband gap in the immediate area and are proud to become the first Certified Broadband Ready Community in Henry County."

Harrison County
"The Harrison County Commissioners, in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce of Harrison County, Connect Harrison County, Inc., Harrison County EDC, Harrison County Community Foundation and other elected officials, have dedicated years and substantial investment to expand broadband internet infrastructure throughout rural Harrison County. Broadband Ready Communities certification, through the Indiana Broadband Office, is a logical step in attracting various internet service providers to help fill the remaining gap in services in our most rural of communities," said Charlie Crawford, Harrison County Commissioners' President. "This certification, along with the soon to be released Broadband Ready and Infrastructure Deployment Plan being developed by the Chamber and Community Foundation, will help attract and encourage investment in this critical utility in Harrison County."

When is your community's Broadband Ready Community Anniversary? We want to celebrate with you! Reach out to us as INbroadband@lg.in.gov and let's plan an anniversary celebration.

Check out the map below to see the progress that has been made across the State.



TRAVELS OF LT. GOVERNOR SUZANNE CROUCH

Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch is continuing to meet Hoosiers from different industries and communities in 2022. Her travels have brought many opportunities to hear local issues and observe programs that are building a better Indiana. She is looking forward to many more visits this spring and summer.

The lieutenant governor recently joined the Indiana State Department of Agriculture to honor 69 Hoosier farming families for their longstanding farming history. As Indiana's lieutenant governor, Crouch also serves as Secretary of Agriculture in the state. Families can receive an award for keeping agricultural land in the same family for 100 or more years. To learn more about the ceremony, click here.

The lieutenant governor made a stop in the state's first capital in March to talk with farmers about agriculture and other local issues impacting Harrison County. The meeting took place at the Indiana Farm Bureau's office in Corydon.

Lt. Governor Crouch recently visited students at Munster High School in northwest Indiana. At the school, she toured the school's maker space, called the Incubator. This program puts students into the business world, where they get the opportunity to pitch real business ideas, work to secure funding for their proposal and start creating a product.

Follow along with Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch as she continues her statewide travels.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram

ICYMI: STEPS TO SUCCESS

These steps to success are a roadmap. After the completion of step-one, establishing a Broadband Taskforce, communities may decide to skip steps or approach them in different orders based on their mission, goals, needs and what they have already accomplished. Every road is different, yet leads to the same outcome of providing connectivity to our communities.

Thank you to those communities who have shared their strategies, stories of collaboration and success. We are always interested in expanding our case studies and hearing directly from communities on their progress and successes. Schedule time to discuss with us where you're at in the process, what has worked for you and any questions you may have by contacting us at INbroadband@lg.in.gov. Check out our highlighted step for this month!

To learn more, click here.

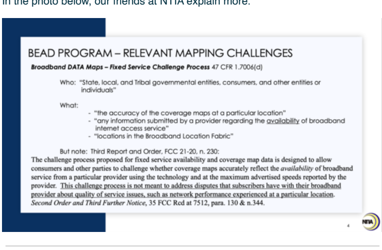
***Eight* Gather Data: Surveys, Mapping, and Eligibility**

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.

The IBO is working hard to understand where the problem areas are within the state. This information will be essential this fall as we anticipate an updated FCC map that will include a local challenge process.

In the photo below, our friends at NTIA explain more.



RFP: WARREN COUNTY

Attention Broadband Providers!

The Warren County Economic Development Organization recently released a request for proposal in search of private providers to deploy, operate and maintain broadband coverage in unserved, or underserved, premises in Warren County.

The submission deadline is May 2, 2022.

To learn more, click here.

WEBSITE UPDATE!

Have you seen our website recently? We have been working hard to keep it up to date and accurate on all things Broadband! To check it out, click here.

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

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