

INDIANA BROADBAND OFFICE OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

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A MESSAGE FROM THE INDIANA BROADBAND OFFICE

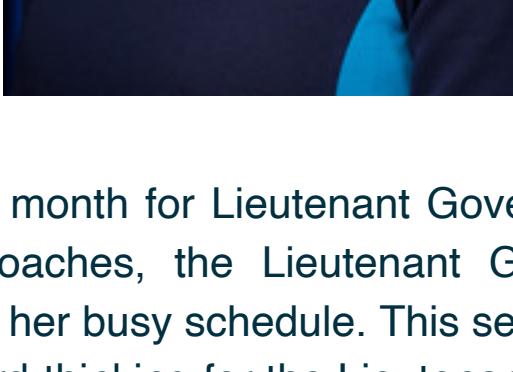
Scott Rudd has recently announced his departure from the Indiana Broadband Office after more than three years of exemplary service as the Director of the Indiana Broadband Office of Lieutenant Governor Suzanne Crouch. The Indiana Broadband Office would like to thank Scott for advancing the Broadband Ready Communities Program, the Statewide Strategic Plan and the COVID Road to Recovery Plan.

Additionally, Scott has offered continuous technical support throughout Indiana and has tirelessly worked on our newsletter addition and social media advancements. From everyone at the Indiana Broadband Office, we want to wish Scott the best of luck in his future endeavors and express gratitude for the many ways he has contributed to the betterment of our organization.

To offset this absence, the Indiana Broadband Office is excited to introduce Dr. Roberto Gallardo, Director of the Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD) and a Purdue Extension Community & Regional Economics Specialist. Roberto will work in collaboration with the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs and the Indiana Broadband Office on the Next Level Connections Broadband Grant programs. OCRA Executive Director Denny Spinner expressed great appreciation for this addition stating, "His expertise and OCRA's continued collaboration with PCRD will benefit the future of broadband and the Next Level Connections Broadband programs."

ORCA has hired a GIS specialist and a data analyst to join the team. Earnie Holtrey, Indiana Broadband Project Manager, will be stepping in to assist Roberto and further fill in for Scott's absence as the Indiana Broadband Office/OCRA restructuring occurs.

TRAVELS OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR SUZANNE CROUCH



October has been a busy month for Lieutenant Governor Suzanne Crouch. As the colder weather approaches, the Lieutenant Governor is sure to keep Hoosiers the top priority in her busy schedule. This season has been a whirlwind of achievement and forward-thinking for the Lieutenant Governor, from providing students with winter coats in partnership with the Indianapolis Colts to being presented with the annual Woman of Distinction Award from Trine University.

In French Lick, the Lieutenant Governor spoke about state resources for rural communities at The Aim Ideas Summit, Indiana's largest municipal officials gathering. The event started October 5th and went through October 7th. The event consisted of exciting speakers, workshops and an exhibit hall. The concluding business session confirmed the election of the 2022 Aim Officers and Board of Directors and the passing of the 2022 Policy Platform.

On October 6th, the Lieutenant Governor attended the fall Owen County Round Table hosted by the Owen County Economic Development Corporation. The discussion centered around broadband accessibility for Owen County. Marce King, Executive Director of Owen County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development, spoke on the efforts of county/town officials and keyholders to instigate a plan that will provide all Owen County residents with broadband by the end of 2023. The Lieutenant Governor spoke of her appreciation of the event on Twitter, stating, "Thank you, @ChamberOwen for inviting me to speak today, and for setting up our discussion with your broadband providers. @EndeavorComm, SCL REMC & @MySmithville are working together to ensure that their investments in broadband include every home, business & location in Owen Co."

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

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INDIANA CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM



Applications are now open for the Indiana Connectivity Program. This new tool can connect residents and businesses that lack internet service with internet service providers and assist in the expense of extending broadband to unserved and underserved locations.

"The Indiana Connectivity Program aims to bring high quality broadband service to unserved and underserved Hoosiers," Crouch said. "The last year and a half has shined a light on the severe importance of having everyone connected. This program is a path to bring service to households and businesses that are in internet darkness or have speeds that are not meeting the demands on our students who are eLearning or our workforce teleworking."

Hoosiers and business owners lacking internet connectivity can communicate their interest by entering their address and information into the Next Level Connections portal [here](#). Hoosiers can also initiate interest by calling the Indiana Broadband Connect Center, which is now open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Hoosiers can reach the call center at 833-639-8522.

To be eligible, a location must have access to actual speeds of less than 25 Mbps (download) and 3 Mbps (upload). Inputting location information into the **Next Level Connections Broadband portal does not guarantee extension of service.**

Communities, please continue to encourage your residents to log on and apply for this program. A media kit has been created for you to utilize within your community and on social media. To access this kit, click [here](#).

To learn more about this opportunity, click [here](#).

NEXT LEVEL CONNECTIONS: ROUND THREE

Round Three of the Next Level Connections Grant Program continues to be a success. Indiana will invest \$270 million toward improving broadband access and adoption in Indiana. The Next Level Connections Broadband Grant Program is designed to provide funds for the deployment of broadband infrastructure to provide eligible broadband service to unserved end users, which include households, businesses and community anchor institutions, such as schools and health clinics, across Indiana.

Round Three letters of intent were due at the end of September and challenges to the submitted addresses are due November 8th. Full applications for Round Three of funding will be due January 6th, 2022.

Round Three of the program has received more than 250 letters of intent requesting a total of more than \$608 million in state grant funding with an additional \$280 million in matching funds. Decisions about how much can be awarded and to which projects are expected in the spring of 2022.

To learn more about the Next Level Connections Grant Program, 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.

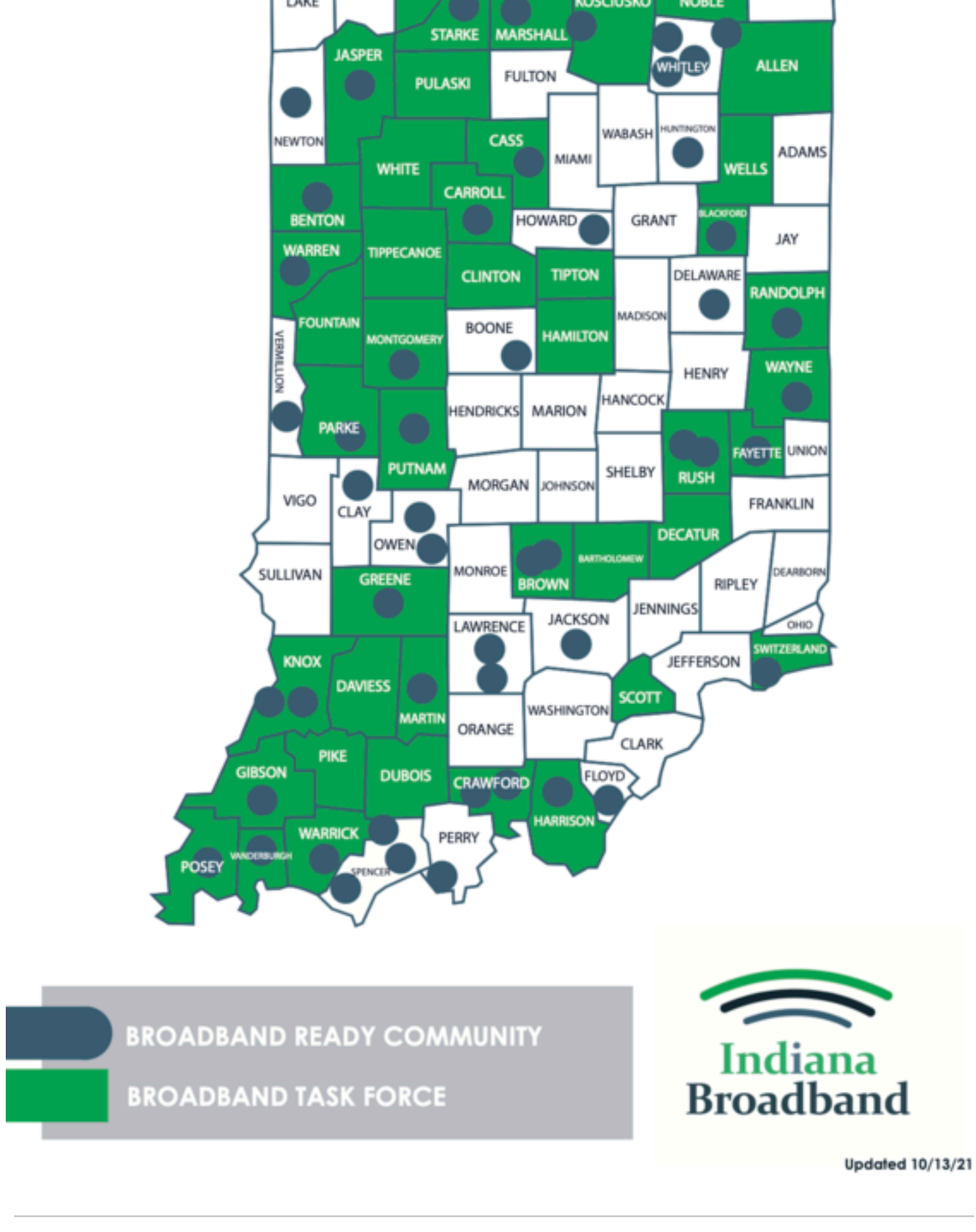
To learn more about being a Broadband Ready Community, click [here](#).

One of our recent Broadband Ready Communities is Blackford County, Indiana. Recently, Lieutenant Governor Suzanne Crouch and the Indiana Broadband Office announced that Blackford County is now designated as an official Broadband Ready Community.

"Our administration remains focused on bringing high-speed, reliable internet service to unserved and underserved Hoosiers," Crouch said. "Congratulations to Blackford County as it joins the more than 50 other Indiana communities that are now broadband ready. This designation could help further attract broadband investment, either through the private sector or potentially through our Next Level Connections Broadband Grant program."

Stay tuned for several announcements over the next few weeks as we add new communities to our program.

Check out the most recent BBRC in the map below.



INTRODUCING: BROADBAND CHAMPIONS



The Indiana Broadband Office is excited to announce our Broadband Champions Program. This program shines a spotlight on the Broadband Ready Communities throughout Indiana and the leaders who helped to make it happen.

To become Broadband Ready, communities complete an application that showcases their ability and capacity to create a more expansive broadband plan. With over 50 communities, many individuals throughout Indiana have dedicated their time to make sure the members of their community are pushing for expansive broadband accessibility.

Throughout this program, Broadband Champions were given the opportunity to reflect on the impact they have made through broadband in areas of education, healthcare, business and residential life. By championing broadband, these individuals can give advice, guidance and inspiration for other communities looking to become Broadband Ready.

Through accomplishing this impressive feat for their communities, our Broadband Champions have been able to lay the groundwork for connectivity across Indiana.

Stay tuned for future videos with the many Broadband Champions in Indiana through our Instagram account.

Follow our Instagram account by clicking [here](#).

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, and we'll share on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) or in the newsletter!



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