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The West Virginia Broadband Enhancement Council is commissioned to enhance the development of plans, processes and procedures for extending broadband access into underserved and unserved areas of the state.

Broadband Development Clears Another Benchmark Thanks To Governor

A message from WV Broadband Enhancement Council Chairman Robert Hinton

The Broadband Enhancement Council salutes Gov. Jim Justice for his advancement of policies designed to accelerate broadband development throughout West Virginia.

Gov. Justice noted in a September 17 press release that the Federal Highway Administration has verified that federal law allows the West Virginia Division of Highways to permit broadband expansion and other development projects on the state right of way without collecting a fee. The governor's full statement is below.

This action is a major step forward in the development of policies that reduce barriers to the development of broadband infrastructure and new private investment through the effective use of the state's existing roadbed right of way system. The Council supports balanced policies that incorporate the concerns of residents and businesses who want and need greater connectivity. As policies are fully implemented, communities throughout West Virginia should take note and provide input into their development.



As the Council continues to pursue its mission of promote broadband development in unserved and underserved areas, the expansion of West Virginia's broadband infrastructure remains our top priority. We look forward to working with the West Virginia Division of Highways to implement policies that help our state become more connected.

Gov. Justice Announces FHA Has Verified Permitting For Broadband Expansion

Statement from Governor Jim Justice - September 17, 2018

Gov. Jim Justice announced September 17 that the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) has verified that federal law allows the West Virginia Division of Highways to permit broadband expansion and other development projects on state right of way without collecting a fee.



"This is a major step forward as we expand West Virginia's broadband network to better serve our state's businesses and citizens," Gov. Justice said.

All Dig Once permit requests are now being processed by DOH utility managers in accordance with state law ([HB 4447](#)) that was passed earlier this year. The DOH and Broadband Enhancement Council are currently working together to finalize development of standard forms, procedures and right of way access agreements that will be implemented under the new Dig Once Policy.

"As we continue to grow our economy, the expansion of the information highway and our broadband system is critical," Gov. Justice added. "We're extremely pleased that we've been able to get this verified by the FHA and we're working as quickly as possible to assist our broadband providers with their development efforts."

'Everything Is Going To Be Tied To The Internet Eventually'

Broadband Is A Vital Component To Smart Revitalization and Redevelopment

Broadband should be part of any revitalization and redevelopment plan, as discussed at the High Speed Brownfields session of the 2018 WV Brownfields Conference, at the Charleston Civic Center.

Panelist Eric Price, P.E., L.S., and Senior Project Manager with Thompson & Litton, Inc., of Wise, Virginia, noted that planners should consider broadband in all redevelopment projects because, "everything is going to be tied to the internet eventually." Price noted that the inclusion of broadband in redevelopment projects can also provide access to federal funding sources.

Council Chairman Robert Hinton detailed the Council's collaboration with local governments, community leaders and citizens in navigating the challenges associated with broadband development.



Aaron Sporck, Director of Economic Development for U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito, reviewed federal grant and loan broadband programs, advising that the current pool of dedicated funds is one of the federal government's largest ever available for broadband development.

Noting that broadband projects, like other infrastructure projects, require patience and flexibility, Charlie Dennie, Vice President of Government Relations and Special Projects for Alpha Technologies, detailed the company's innovative fiber infrastructure project in the cities of Charleston and South Charleston.

WV Brownfields Conference participants included more than 200 economic development and environmental professionals, developers, state and local officials, federal representatives, entrepreneurs, planners and community redevelopment professionals.

Enhanced Connectivity Focus Of WV Chamber of Commerce Business Summit

The West Virginia Chamber of Commerce recognized the importance of broadband at its 83rd Annual Meeting and Business Summit, during a session titled, Discussion on Broadband Expansion, 5G and Small Cell Deployment. The Business Summit is the largest gathering of business, industry, financial, and political leaders in West Virginia.

Moderated by Bill Bissett, President, Huntington Regional Chamber of Commerce, this session focused on the critical role of broadband in West Virginia's economic future.



Panelists included West Virginia Senator Greg Boso, (R - Nicholas, 11th); Beth Cooley, Senior Director, State Legislative Affairs, CTIA; Robert Hinton, Chairman, Broadband Enhancement Council; Tiffany Lawrence, WV for Broadband, and Kelly Workman, Development Manager, WV Development Office.

The West Virginia Chamber of Commerce outlined its dedication to broadband expansion in its 2018 position paper, which states, "In our ever expanding digital world, broadband access has become a vital necessity for households and

businesses alike. Broadband access has rapidly evolved into a critical infrastructure component.

"In recognition of this shift, many states have implemented broadband initiatives to remain competitive in attracting and retaining jobs. These broadband policy efforts have come to the forefront of State government efforts focused on economic development and job creation. It is abundantly clear that affordable, high-speed broadband access is now a dominant consideration for business communities, their employees, their customers, and their supply chains.

"The Chamber supports any state policy that will incentivize the private sector to invest in unserved and underserved markets throughout the State."

Webster County Leads The Way For Broadband Development in Southern WV

This is a continuing series which features HUD CDBG Broadband Development Projects.

The Webster County Commission (Commission) is the lead agency for a 2018 HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for broadband development for a five-county region. The Commission was awarded the grant in February and its project team has selected Thompson & Litton, Inc. to serve as the project's designer to develop a comprehensive broadband service study for Fayette, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pocahontas and Webster counties. The Region 4 Planning and Development Council is the grant administrator.

In addition to chartering the broadband needs for these five counties, Region 4 and Thompson & Litton are collaborating with the Region 1 Planning and Development Council and its six-county CDBG broadband development grant to map the needs for 11 contiguous counties throughout southern West Virginia.

"This study allows for an overall needs analysis and compilation of the what this region needs to move forward with broadband development. We are going to compile a full listing of existing broadband providers and their respective service areas including capabilities, establish the best applications of



existing, current and future technologies and develop an overall map of broadband facilities," said John Tuggle, Region 4 Executive Director. "This will lead us to detailed recommendations that will provide the most cost-effective and efficient broadband system to ensure access to fully functional and affordable internet for the citizens of Southern West Virginia."

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provides CDBG funds to the State of West Virginia and has directed states to consider the availability of broadband in low- to moderate-income areas. For Program Year 2017, Gov. Jim Justice announced more than \$1.5 million in CDBG funding be dedicated to broadband projects. The deadline to submit a [2018 application](#) is October 30.



\$12 Million Allocated For Broadband In WV; 8,000 Locales To Be Served

Nearly 8,000 rural locations in West Virginia have been selected to receive broadband access service through the Federal Communications Commission's Connect America Fund Phase II (CAF II) auction. Three services providers were collectively awarded \$11,997,199 for broadband projects over the next 10 years in the state, the [FCC announced](#). The providers are:

- **Citynet LLC., of Bridgeport, WV**, which will receive \$6.5 million for 898 locations in the counties of Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Taylor, and Webster.
- **Hardy Telecommunications, Inc., of Lost River, WV**, which will receive \$47,435 for seven locations in the Rio area of Hampshire County.
- **ViaSat, Inc., of Carlsbad, California**, which will receive \$5.43 million for 7,057 locations in 47 counties, with emphasis in Calhoun, Clay, Marshall and Wetzel counties.

According to the FCC, 713,176 locations nationwide will be served with high-speed internet access through CAF II funding of \$1.4 billion. The FCC requires [winning providers](#) to build out 40 percent of assigned locations within three years, and to complete construction by the end of the sixth year. A map of locations, sorted by census blocks, is available [here](#).



Awareness Campaign To Promote Speed Test, Broadband Council

A statewide awareness campaign to promote a better understanding of the Broadband Council and encourage state residents to take the Council's speed test is underway.

The West Virginia Commerce Marketing and Communication team is spearheading the initiative, entitled, "Enhancing Connectivity For A Better West Virginia." The campaign is focused on three primary messages, notably, the Council is:

- A reputable organization;
- Advancing broadband through grant development assistance for communities; and
- Promoting increased participation in its Speed Test to gather vital data to advance broadband.

The campaign will promote the Council through targeted social media advertisements; engage media outlets in each of the state's 11 regional planning and develop council areas; continue to secure speaking engagements with civic, county and statewide organizations; and ad placements promoting the Speed Test in 45 daily and weekly newspapers statewide.

A link to the Council's Facebook page is located at the end of this newsletter, or search "West Virginia Broadband Enhancement Council" from the Facebook main page. The Council website can be found [here](#).

Map of the Month

Fayette County, West Virginia

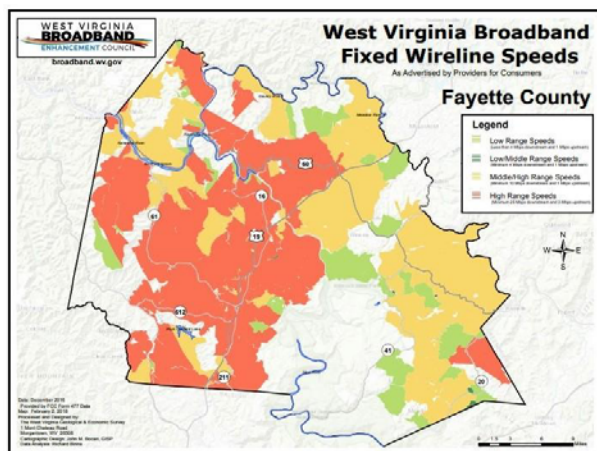
Each month, the Broadband Enhancement Council will feature a map detailing broadband fixed wireline speeds based upon current FCC data. All county maps are available to print, save and download at the Council [website](#).

Fayette County is located in the state's southern coalfield region and one of the state's most popular destinations for tourism and outdoor recreation. County leaders are pursuing broadband development to enhance community services for residents, businesses and visitors.

County leaders also see the expansion of affordable and reliable broadband as part of a marketing strategy to attract small businesses and entrepreneurs who prefer rural settings with outdoor recreation amenities which in turn would provide growth and job creation.

The Fayette County Commission has secured a 2017 Community Development Block Grant award for broadband planning development and is a partner in the CDBG grant secured by the Webster County Commission, also designated for broadband planning (see related article above).

With its grant, the Commission's project team intends to determine the best planning models to deliver last-mile broadband delivery to its residents and businesses.



Click on the image for a larger view.

WV Connected



The Broadband Enhancement Council joined the 2018 Women & Technology Conference, sponsored by TechConnectWV at the Embassy Suites in Charleston. Attendees had an opportunity to learn more about the Council and, of course, take the Speed Test.

Mark Your Calendar

Next Broadband Enhancement Council Meeting:

Thursday, October 18, 2018, 10:00 a.m. State Capitol, Building 3, Suite 100 Conference Room. Note: Location may change. Check our website for details.

NTIA To Host Virginia Broadband Summit:

Tuesday, October 30, 2018 - One-day program. For more information, click [here](#).

FCC Comment

Broadband e-Connectivity Pilot Program: The Broadband Council responded to the FCC's request for [comments](#) to its e-Connectivity Pilot Program.

West Virginia Broadband In The News

[Leaders Discuss Broadband In West Virginia](#)

The Broadband Council urges commercial and residential internet users in this region to test their internet speed through the [West Virginia Speed Test](#) portal.

Data obtained through the speed test will support the pursuit of funding for broadband infrastructure development.

To read past West Virginia Broadband Enhancement Council Newsletters, click [here](#).

[Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Officials Seek Broadband Grant](#)

[Wider Broadband Access Is Good News For WV](#)

[WVPBS Prepares For Broadcast Standards Changes](#)

[WV Senators Discuss Broadband](#)

[Opinion: WV Is In A Broadband Desert](#)

[Taylor County Pursues Broadband](#)

[Free ROW Access Seeks To Boost Broadband Deployment in WV](#)

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