BroadbandUSA Technical Assistance to Rural Communities

May 14-21, 2018 marks the 6th annual national Infrastructure Week, so BroadbandUSA is focusing this month on connectivity in rural communities. According to the FCC's 2018 data, 25 million Americans and 31% of rural Americans do not have broadband available to them. The BroadbandUSA Technical Assistance Team has devoted time to working with providers and local government officials to improving broadband infrastructure in rural communities.

For example, the team assisted a community in rural Alaska by providing solution- and technology-neutral advice on many issues, including market assessment, revenue modeling, construction schedules, and specific steps that the local government can implement to assist private providers speed up deployment and expansion of broadband infrastructure. A town in Virginia requested assistance during the implementation process of a new land mobile radio (LMR) public safety system. In Maine, the team provided feedback to a remote community during its Request for Information (RFI) development to attract potential broadband providers. On a regular basis, the team provides assistance to support infrastructure and digital inclusion planning, funding, and implementation efforts.

The BroadbandUSA Technical Assistance Team is looking forward to serving more rural communities through building partnerships. Contact them at broadbandusa@ntia.doc.gov .

Rural Broadband – Quick Resource Guide:
- NTIA: The State of the Urban/Rural Digital Divide
- BroadbandUSA: How We Can Help
- US Department of Agriculture Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity
- CRS: Broadband Loan and Grant Programs in the USDA's Rural Utilities Service (PDF)
- USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program
- USDA Rural Utility Service Telecommunications Programs:
  - Community Connect Grants
  - Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants
  - Farm Bill Broadband Loans & Loan Guarantees
  - Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans and Guarantees
- Broadband Internet's Value for Rural America (PDF, USDA, 2009) This report analyzes rural broadband use; rural broadband availability; and broadband's social and economic effects on rural areas
- Federal Communications Commission - Universal Service:
  - Schools and Libraries
  - Lifeline
  - Rural Health care Program
  - High Cost/Connect America Fund
- Office of the Comptroller: Bank Financing for Rural Initiative (video)
- Federal Reserve: Closing the Digital Divide
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- NTCA, The Rural Broadband Association: Transforming Rural America: NTCA members deliver high-quality communications services in the most sparsely populated, highest-cost rural areas of the country, and help to build unique, successful rural communities.
- FirstNet
- WTA, Advocates for Rural Broadband
- Rural Wireless Association
- WISPA: Wireless Internet Service Provider Association

Broadband News and Updates

Federal News
- Connect America Fund Phase II Auction (Auction 903)
- Two U.S. Cities Win NSF Support for 5G Wireless Test Beds
- Safe Travel app wins 2017 Congressional App Challenge in Virginia's 10th Congressional District represented by Barbara Comstock
- NTIA Signs Agreement for Wireless Test Bed Study in Partnership with University of Colorado Boulder

State News
- New Mexico Broadband Program: Broadband Guide for Electric Utilities (PDF)
- North Carolina Department of Information Technology: The Community Broadband Playbook
- Wyoming Legislature passes ENDOW bills to Grow and Diversify Economy
- Brown signs bill boosting broadband for rural schools
- Delaware Is Dead Set on Putting Your State's Broadband to Shame

Public Safety/FirstNet
- Devices are Ready for Public Safety's Use on FirstNet
- Recruitment of First Responder Network Authority Board Members
- Celebrating the Nation's Public Safety Telecommunicators

Stakeholder Resources
- CTIA: The Global Race to 5G

Funding
- Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Rural Health Care FY2018 Filing Window Period
- Congress Passes the RAY BAUM'S Act of 2018, and Other Telecom Provisions
- U.S. Department of Transportation Launches BUILD Transportation Program, Announces $1.5 Billion Notice of Funding Opportunity
- Bank Financing for Rural Initiative (video)

Other Broadband News
- Presentation of Charles Benton Digital Equity Award to Deb Socia
- The Digital Inclusion Coalition Guidebook
- Smarter Cities and Safer Self-Driving Cars: Imagining Life in 5G
- Wireless Infrastructure is One Piece of the Broadband Puzzle for Rural America

BroadbandUSA Spotlight

State Broadband Leaders Network Share Successes

Monthly, BroadbandUSA hosts a virtual meeting for the participants in the State Broadband Leaders Network (SBLN) to share news and policies that assist their states in increasing broadband access. During the March meeting, participants from 20 states shared their successes. A sample includes:
- *California's* new legislation for $300 million in broadband deployment is currently in the rulemaking process.
- *Colorado's* bill for $115 million for broadband deployment was passed by the state legislature and signed into law by the Governor
- *Tennessee's Governor* provided an additional $5 million for a total of $15 million in grant funds for 2018
- *Wisconsin* allocated $35.5 million 2 programs: $13 million in broadband grants and the remaining for schools.

In addition, Brian O'Hara, Senior Director Regulatory Issues at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) also updated the participants. He reported that NRECA member serve 42 million people: 90% of areas in persistent poverty and are rural with 8 customers per mile compared to 33 per mile in more urban areas. He also noted that electric co-ops were committed to serving last mile with electricity and are now looking to do the same with broadband. For more information on the SBLN, see State Broadband Leaders Network.

Events

NTIA Events
May 16, 2018
BroadbandUSA Practical Broadband Conversations Webinar Series: Infrastructure Week Special: Successful Models and Best Practices for Rural Broadband Deployment. *See column on the right for details.*

Events of Interest
May 1-2, 2018
APCO Public Safety Broadband Summit, Arlington, VA. The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) Broadband Summit is an annual, DC-based opportunity to discuss the latest technology advancements affecting public safety communications networks.

May 1-3, 2018
2018 Spring CTA Technology & Standards Forum, Santa Clara, CA. CTA's Mobile Health Solutions Working Group will focus on developments and review draft content for the *Guiding Principles of Practice and Transparency for Mobile Health Solutions*, which will include privacy and security, and regulatory compliance considerations covering existing standards, government guidance and best practices for mobile health solutions, including both devices and applications.

May 7-8, 2018
Smart Cities Week, Silicon Valley, Santa Clara, CA. Smart Cities Week Silicon Valley will showcase breakthrough ideas in various technologies, such as autonomous vehicles, artificial intelligence, drones, augmented reality and advances in cybersecurity. *NOTE: Wireless SuperCluster Conference, Sponsored by NIST, NTIA and Joint Venture Silicon Valley, will follow Smart Cities Week on May 10, 2018.*

May 7-10, 2018
National Digital Inclusion Week, Nationwide. A national week of online and live events to support digital inclusion.

May 10-12, 2018
National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) 2018 Spring Executive Committee Meeting, Denver, CO. *Speaker:* BroadbandUSA's Andrew Spurgeon, Smart Communities Foundation Partnership, May 10, 2018.

May 14-21, 2018
Infrastructure Week, Nationwide. A national week of events; media coverage; and education and issue advocacy to elevate infrastructure as a critical issue impacting America's economy, society, security and future.

May 15 – 17
2018 ACE School and RUS Symposium, Atlanta, GA. The Association of Communication Engineers (ACE) and Rural Utilities Service (RUS) will host the 2018 ACE School and RUS Symposium. This two and a half day event will host industry experts from around the country presenting on topics important in today's telecom environment, technology presentations from sponsors, and will give attendees access to networking opportunities within the industry.

May 17, 2018
Webinar: Introduction to Global Cities Team Challenge Agriculture and Rural Supercluster, 12pm – 1pm The webinar will showcase some early action cluster projects in smart agriculture for plants and livestock, innovative rural connectivity projects, telehealth programs, and food hub efforts across the United States. *Speaker:* BroadbandUSA's Jean Rice
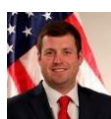
May 21-24
Connectivity Expo, Charlotte, NC. Connect (X) focuses on the business of connectivity and provides a platform for companies and organizations to reach, influence, interact with and impact executives and leadership from a wide range of business sectors. *BroadbandUSA staff will speak at this event.*

Policy Corner

David J. Redl, Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator marked *National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week*, April 8-14, in a blog honoring the nation's public safety professionals. He noted that "we may take 911 calls for granted today, but it was only 50 years ago that the first emergency call was completed in Haleyville, Alabama. We're now on the cusp of improving our 911 system by providing our highly trained professionals with the advanced tools they need to do their jobs in the 21st century." See complete blog here.

Webinars

BroadbandUSA Practical Broadband Conversations Webinar Series

Topic: Infrastructure Week Special: Successful Models and Best Practices for Rural Broadband Deployment

Date: Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Overview: Digital technologies impact all sectors of the economy including agriculture, small town main streets, and regional economic development. Yet 31% of rural Americans still lack access to fixed terrestrial broadband speeds of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up. Increased interest in broadband is creating new opportunities leading service providers and civic leaders to find new models to expand rural broadband. We will explore three successful case studies and highlight best practices for successful rural broadband deployment.
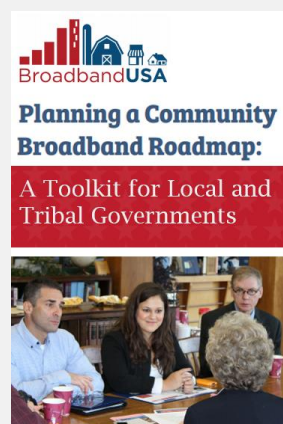
- Wes McCart, Commissioner, Stevens County, WA
- Debra Hansen, Director, Washington State University, Stevens County Extension
- Bob Hance, President and CEO, Midwest Energy Cooperative
- Gina Shuler, Marketing Director, Home Telecom
- *Moderator:* Karen Archer Perry, Senior Policy Analyst, BroadbandUSA

Register here

Want to access past Practical Broadband Conversations webinars?

Visit our Webinar Archives for past presentations, transcripts and audio recordings.

BroadbandUSA Resources

Planning a Community Broadband Roadmap:
A Toolkit for Local and Tribal Governments

Planning a Community Broadband Roadmap: A Toolkit for Local and Tribal Governments (PDF)

This toolkit provides advice on building broadband networks, enhancing public computer centers, expanding broadband to unserved areas, encouraging public-private partnerships and promoting broadband connectivity to homes, businesses and institutions.

NTIA's BroadbandUSA program promotes innovation and economic growth by supporting efforts to expand broadband connectivity and digital inclusion across America. In this role, BroadbandUSA serves communities, industry and non-profits that want to expand broadband infrastructure and promote digital inclusion.

Contact Us

If you are interested in receiving technical assistance, please send an email to broadbandusa@ntia.doc.gov or call 202-482-2048. For more information, visit our website at www.broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov.

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