How Good is Your Internet in McLean County?

McLean County Residents Encouraged to Participate in a Survey

Bloomington…The McLean County Regional Planning Commission and McLean County Government are ramping up efforts to expand high speed internet services with a focus on rural areas, and residents are being encouraged to participate in a brief survey to measure their current internet speed and gauge interest in expansion efforts.

McLean County is one of only five counties selected to participate in *Broadband Breakthrough*, a community broadband expansion program. The effort is led by the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society and the Illinois Soy Association, and financially supported by the United Soybean Board. For the next few months, McLean County will be developing a plan aimed at successfully procuring future government funding earmarked to expand broadband infrastructure.

"This is just the first step of a multi-step process," said Anthony Grant, McLean County Assistant Administrator. "Over the next few years there will be billions of dollars in federal and state funds available to vastly expand internet services and increase speeds for rural America. But community participation is pivotal at this stage if we want to secure future funding for McLean County," he added.

Increasing access and the quality of internet services across the county is not only beneficial to businesses, healthcare, economic development, and education, it's a critical component for McLean County farmers to remain competitive. Smart agriculture equipment can deliver precision planting, irrigation, soil nutrition, and other advantages that can reduce expenditures and increase profitability. One recent USDA report estimates expanding rural broadband and e-Connectivity could result in at least $46-billion in national economic benefits every year.

McLean County residents are encouraged to take the survey from their homes or businesses using their current internet carriers. "Residents have the opportunity to accurately test their upload and download speeds," said

Ray Lai, Executive Director of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission, which is conducting the survey. "They can also provide additional information related to accessibility, availability, reliability, and affordability of their internet services now and in the future."

The survey is available to McLean County residents until March 31st and can be completed online here: https://go.illinois.edu/MC-Internet. Paper copies of the survey are available at McLean County public libraries.

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