

Transforming Tourism



TOURISM BUSINESSES CREATE JOBS FOR THOUSANDS OF MISSOURI RESIDENTS AND REVITALIZE COMMUNITIES. THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY PUMPS MILLIONS INTO THE ECONOMIES OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND THE STATE OF MISSOURI. BUSINESSES CAN LEVERAGE BROADBAND TO ATTRACT NEW VISITORS, TRAIN EMPLOYEES AND MARKET THEIR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES IN A WAY THAT MAKES SIZE AND LOCATION LESS RELEVANT THAN EVER BEFORE.



TRANSFORMING TOURISM IN MISSOURI

High-speed connectivity, or broadband, is increasingly becoming essential for tourist destinations and businesses in the tourism and hospitality industry. Travelers may seek out distant locales to 'get away from it all' but they still want or need to be somewhat connected to the rest of the world.

Missouri, with numerous destinations and activities for tourists, has a vested interest in ensuring their tourism and hospitality industry is equipped to handle the changing needs of today's traveler.

From amusement parks to museums, from collegiate and professional sports teams to state parks, fishing and hunting, the 'Show Me State' is full of sites attractive to tourists both from around the state, country and even the world.

Increasingly, travelers are planning trips and making reservations online. Booking online is usually cheaper without the added commission and cost of a travel agency, and there are some great deals to be found on transportation and lodging. If your property or business is not found online, it's likely invisible to all but regularly returning clients. In order to create a presence, it's great to be

found in local, regional and national travel guides, but even so people will want to book online, meaning you still need a high speed connection.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC) NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN

The FCC's National Broadband Plan includes goals for our economic development, including the tourism and hospitality industry. These goals serve as a starting point for regional discussions about the best way to deliver and use broadband technology to transform tourism across the state. The Plan's recommendations include:

Give tourism businesses and their employees the broadband training they need to remain competitive in the global economy

Small businesses, including local tourism establishments across the state of Missouri, account for a majority of the more than 1.2 million new jobs generated by the growth of the Internet during the last 10 to 15 years. The Small Business Administration and the FCC's Office of Communications Business Opportunities should work

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together with leading private communications and technology firms to provide tools and training -- applying proven ideas and practices in the digital economy.

Keep communities dependent on tourism competitive and innovative in the 21st century economy by putting broadband at the forefront of regional development

Communities without broadband technology will be left behind -- on the outside looking in at the digital revolution. Broadband technology allows regions and communities to compete globally -- attracting new firms, investments and jobs. Local economic development plans and federal programs must take this into account when assessing the economic prospects of a community.

How can Broadband Transform Tourism in my area?

Several other factors need to be considered along with implementing broadband technology. Are the right tools in place for tourism to leverage broadband? Do current processes and procedures allow enough room for use of broadband? Is everyone properly trained to use the technology effectively?

MoBroadbandNow, a five-year initiative launched by Gov. Nixon in 2009, coordinates efforts to obtain funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Commerce specifically set aside for broadband expansion. *MoBroadbandNow* seeks to expand broadband accessibility to 95 percent of the total population, a significant increase from the current projected accessibility of 79.7 percent.

MoBroadbandNow can provide education, awareness, and facilitate communication of funding opportunities for tourism.

But, we also need to more fully understand how the tourism and hospitality industry would like to use broadband, and what are the barriers and challenges to integration?

Please share your stories with us at: <http://transform.mo.gov/broadband/>

Follow us on Twitter -- @MoBroadbandNow -- to stay up to speed on broadband news, program activities and funding opportunities.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS ...

We have had visitors and residents complain about the limited availability of high speed internet, and when they can find limited locations that have high speed Internet, the cost is usually prohibitive. Some of the visitors would like to move here full time—but cannot make that commitment due to the high-speed access they require for work.

— Robert Hoff, VP & Branch Manager, Central Bank of the Lake of the Ozarks

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ABOUT TOURISM AND BROADBAND

1. Are the right tools in place for the tourism and hospitality industry to leverage broadband? If yes, what tools are in place? If not, what hardware, software and other equipment do you need? Can you provide examples of how it would improve today's tourism and hospitality industry?
2. Do current processes and procedures encourage the use of broadband? What could you do differently with broadband that would promote its use in the tourism and hospitality industry?
3. Is everyone properly trained to use broadband technology effectively? How can we better prepare the tourism and hospitality workforce to utilize broadband to its maximum benefit?
4. Does broadband access and availability meet minimum standards for effective use by both destination locations and tourists? If yes, how? If not, what are the locations that need broadband enhancements and the challenges in getting it there?
5. Is broadband technology cost prohibitive? If so, what are some cost-saving measures that could be implemented to increase use?