

Transforming Economic Development



TRANSFORMING SMALL AND RURAL BUSINESSES

High speed connectivity, or broadband, enhances the opportunities for current businesses, while providing the infrastructure to attract entrepreneurs, knowledge workers, and technology-based companies that would not have otherwise considered locating in Missouri.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC) NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN

The FCC's National Broadband Plan includes goals for our small and rural businesses. These goals serve as a starting point for regional discussions about the best way to deliver and use broadband technology to transform the economy across the state. The Plan's recommendations include:

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

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

Build a new online national employment assistance platform to efficiently connect struggling workers with resources

As our economy continues to rebound, broadband can be utilized to deliver assistance to help the underemployed and unemployed excel in the modern workplace. Technology-based instruction for vocational training reduces the cost by about a third, while also decreasing the time required and increasing the effectiveness of instruction.

Keep American communities 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 our communities.

Help eliminate tax and regulatory barriers to telework so workers can do their jobs from anywhere.

At the center of the modern, digital economy is telework and telecommuting -- working from anywhere using Internet and broadband

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connections. Next-generation technologies are connecting employers with jobs across town, across the state and across the country. The FCC will work with other agencies to serve as the example for the private sector by working to implement policies and technology that enable teleworking and telecommuting.

How can Broadband Transform Small and Rural Businesses in my area?

Several other factors need to be considered along with implementing broadband technology. Are the right tools in place for businesses to leverage broadband? Do current processes and procedures encourage the 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.

SMALL BUSINESSES CREATE JOBS FOR THOUSANDS OF MISSOURI RESIDENTS AND REVITALIZE COMMUNITIES. SMALL BUSINESSES CAN LEVERAGE BROADBAND TO FIND SUPPLIERS, TRAIN EMPLOYEES AND MARKET THEIR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES IN A WAY THAT MAKES SIZE AND LOCATION LESS RELEVANT.

MoBroadbandNow can provide education, awareness, and facilitate communication of funding opportunities for small and rural businesses.

But, we also need to more fully understand how businesses 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 ...

It would also allow us to improve marketing capabilities, and ultimately provide means of growth in the company.

-Burgers' Smokehouse

The proposed network would provide an economic lifeline to Cooper County.

-Cooper County Commission

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ABOUT BUSINESS, THE ECONOMY AND BROADBAND

1. Are the right tools in place for businesses 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 businesses?
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 business sector?
3. Is everyone properly trained to use broadband technology effectively? How can we better prepare the workforce to utilize broadband to its maximum benefit?
4. Does broadband access and availability meet minimum standards for effective businesses and e-commerce applications? 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?