Frequently Asked Questions

About the Broadband Committee

Moffat County communities including Craig, Dinosaur, Hamilton, and Maybell, along with local funding partners Tri-State Generation and Transmission, Colorado Northwestern Community College, The Memorial Hospital, Yampa Valley Electric Association, and Danner Communications, have come together to study the current broadband services available in Moffat County and to study ways to improve broadband services. The intention of the study is not to diminish the hard work, the investments and the efforts that many of the communities have done to improve broadband services, but rather, to enhance and expand the efforts that are already underway.

What is "Broadband?"

Broadband is the pathway to fast Internet service. In February of 2015, the FCC defined the minimum target for broadband as having the ability to download 25 Mbps and upload 3 Mbps. This is the minimum amount of speed needed to connect to the Internet and many cities and communities have or are working to put in place "next generation" broadband services. Next generation broadband services offer 1,000 Mbps or 1 Gigabit per second service delivery. This is 10 to 100 times faster than almost all commercially available services.

What is "Bandwidth?"

Bandwidth refers to the capacity, or speed of the networks to carry traffic. It is often defined in Megabits per second (Mbps) or Gigabits per second (Gbps). 1 Gigabit is 1,000 Mbps.

Why is broadband so important to us? What's the real advantage?

Next generation broadband services offer many advantages. Having access to affordable, abundant, high capacity Internet is no longer a luxury. It is a necessity, like water and electricity. Having access to abundant broadband is critical for:

- creating more jobs,
- creating vibrant communities that are economically stable,
- providing for new opportunities,
- fostering an entrepreneurial-friendly environment,
- improving technology advancement,
- providing better access to educational opportunities and online learning applications,
- providing for better and less expensive healthcare,
- improving public safety and emergency management services
- better access to e-government services,

- facilitating more telework and telecommuting, and
- attracting the New Knowledge economy.

Advanced broadband networks are creating enormous shifts in local, state, national and global societies, as well as markets, business and in institutions around the world. Therefore, it is critical to have this infrastructure available to all citizens.

We need advanced or next generation broadband if we, as a community and county, want to remain competitive.

Why does this Matter?
Global Internet network traffic has quadrupled from 2009 to 2014 and both commercial and residential Internet bandwidth consumption have doubled every year since then. In the early days of the Internet, we primarily used text messaging and email. The applications that use the Internet today are much more bandwidth intensive. Movies, pictures, interactive videos, MRIs, X-rays and cloud-based applications take much more bandwidth than email. For example, one video download is the equivalent of downloading 30,000 web pages. The applications we use on the Internet are becoming much more feature-rich and bandwidth intensive and our existing networks cannot keep up with the demand for networks that support these applications.

Can the City or County put pressure on the existing providers through better negotiations of the cable franchise?
Unfortunately, no. The cable franchises that the City has with Charter govern broadcast TV services, not broadband. Broadband services are not regulated and therefore, the City does not have the authority to govern existing broadband providers.

Why is the committee involved in the study?
The members of the committee see the importance of having next generation broadband services to manage their respective operations, and perhaps more importantly, see the need for next generation broadband as a way to spur economic development. Other communities that have improved broadband services and have already seen the tremendous economic impact of building broadband infrastructure. These communities have fostered an environment of innovation, economic development and growth, collaboration, and creative activities. Because access to advanced broadband services is a priority for businesses and entrepreneurs, the communities that have built advanced broadband networks have already benefited economically by attracting businesses and industries, in areas like manufacturing and technology, to re-locate to their communities. For example, Kansas City has already seen an uptake in new high-tech start-ups due mostly to Google's FTTH efforts. Through Homes for

Hackers and the Kansas City Startup Village, entrepreneurs have built a community of innovators enticed by the possibilities presented by the Google Fiber network.

What are the activities of the study?

There are several activities underway that will help inform the broadband committee of the best possible approaches. First of all, we are conducting two surveys – one for residences and homeowners and one designed for businesses, to get feedback from the community on their concerns, what is important, what is needed, and input from the community on the role of government in solving broadband challenges. There is also a speed test link provided within the survey to obtain actual speed test results. We can then map areas within the County that have the biggest needs for improvement.

Secondly, we will be issuing a Request for Information for a Public Private Partnership or Recommendations from the Private Sector on Collaboration. We want to receive input from the existing service providers that are already serving Moffat County and the neighboring counties. We also want to see what other potential partners may want to participate in this process.

From there, we will meet with key stakeholders within the community and look at options for key investments, partners, and strategies for improving broadband services.