

Connectivity Task Force

Final Task Force Report
October 2015

Connectivity Task Force

Purpose: To explore potential strategies and policy recommendations which improve increase connectivity and speed of internet access to rural Marathon County based on following:

1. Best practices in other communities that have addressed connectivity
2. Needs of the business and residents in underserved areas
3. Identification of economic impact of connectivity including opportunities for business, education, health care, etc.
4. Current fiber or infrastructure – where is it and what are the future needs
5. Appropriate role for county government in encouraging private partnerships to address connectivity needs
6. Financial impact including tax levy implications, grant funding, etc.
7. Public safety enhancements of increased connectivity

Connectivity Task Force

Duties and Responsibilities

The Task Force will develop recommended strategies and policies to address connectivity and speed of internet access in rural Marathon County.

Description of Deliverables

The Task Force will provide a final draft of recommended strategies and policies for consideration by the Executive Committee of the Marathon County Board by December 31, 2015

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Current Landscape

Federal Communications Commission Definition of Broadband

- **25 Mbps Download Speed**
- **3 Mbps Upload Speed**

Current Average Speed in Wisconsin

- **~ 11 Mbps Download Speed**

Current Average Speed in Marathon County

- **~ 6 Mbps Download Speed**

Current Landscape

Internet Service Providers (ISP) offer a variety of coverages (depending on your area):

- Charter Communications (Wausau Metro Area) – 60Mbps
- Frontier Communications (Wausau Metro Area & Beyond) – 24Mbps
- Country Wireless (County Wide, Rural Offering) – 7Mbps
- And many more offerings...

Goals

- Increase Broadband Internet Access County-wide to Spur Economic Growth and Educational Opportunities within Marathon County
- Bring Fiber Optic Internet Speeds Directly to My House (kidding 😊 ...kind of)

Benefits

- Encourage Business Development
- Increase Educational Opportunities
- Increase the Availability of In-Home Medical Care
- Assist Public Safety Organizations in Adapting to the Changing Face of Emergency Response

Defining the County's Role in Broadband Connectivity

- Visionary
- Educator
- Facilitator
- Financier

Visionary

- Define Our Vision of Success as it Pertains to Broadband Expansion

Educator

- Increase the Awareness of the County Board through Educational Materials and Discussions on the Importance of Broadband Internet Expansion
- Increase the Public's Awareness of this Issue through the Civic Engagement process

Facilitator

- Work with Non-Governmental Entities & Internet Service Providers (ISP) to Open Lines of Communication
- Develop & Implement a County-wide Dig Once Policy to Enable the Adoption of Broadband Expansion
- Develop & Implement a County-wide Emergency Tower Use Policy for Wireless Broadband Expansion

Financier

- Define the County's Level of Involvement in Funding the Expansion of Broadband Internet in Marathon County
- Explore Areas of Grant Funding to Supplement / Enhance the County's Commitment to Broadband Expansion

Additional Outcomes Needed

- County Board Approval of Task Force Report & Recommendations
- Dig Once Policy Development (Tech & Infrastructure)
- Emergency Tower Use Policy for Wireless Broadband Expansion