



Article: Broadband Internet studied by Chamber

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By: Gary Wilson

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“Our goal is for everyone in Ohio to have access to broadband Internet.”

So stated Gary Lambert, the southeast region field director for Connect Ohio, a public-private partnership which partners with technology-minded businesses, government entities and universities to accelerate technology in the state and close the digital divide.

Lambert was invited by Executive Director John Ulmer of the Perry County Chamber of Commerce for an informational session with members to discuss making broadband internet more available throughout Perry County. Another more common word for broadband internet is high-speed internet.

Meeting specific goals

Lambert stated, “Connect Ohio will work across all sectors of the state economy in partnership with telecommunications providers, information technology companies, public agencies, business and community leaders, researchers and universities in an effort to meet specific goals.”

Connect Ohio’s goals encompass affordable broadband availability for all of Ohio, and dramatically improved use of computers and the Internet by all Ohioans.

Their goals also include local technology planning teams which include every Ohio community, as well as a meaningful Internet presence in all Ohio communities. to improve citizen services and promote economic development through e-government, virtual education and e-health solutions, and a policy and regulatory framework that encourages continued investment in communications and information technologies year after year.

Lambert continued, “Expanding broadband Internet into Perry County does matter, for better education and economic development. If a business is thinking about coming here they’re not going to ask, ‘When will I be able to get broadband?’ They’re going to ask ‘Where is broadband Internet available now?’ So it’s really important to your communities in this county.”

Connect Ohio is a comprehensive initiative which will blanket Ohio with broadband Internet access and dramatically improve the use of related technology. The program is the result of a partnership between the State of Ohio and Connected Nation, a national non-profit organization that specializes in increasing technology access and literacy.

'No Child Left Offline'

The initiative will include efforts to connect low income Ohioans to technology through programs such as "No Child Left Offline" which places computers in the homes of disadvantaged families.

During a Chamber meeting earlier this year, Ulmer had , "The chances of broadband Internet services coming to this area are still in the developmental stages, so to speak. This is a hot topic, but we're running into some roadblocks as far as getting some exact figures as to what this type of project would cost Perry County, and what we need to have in place to maintain the towers and everything else associated with it. We are working on this, and appreciate any input."

Lambert concluded, "What this all boils down to is, increased economic development and improved education throughout your county."