

ChaffeeConnect

- *Growing Today's Local Ideas into Tomorrow's Global Solutions*

Talking Points

- It is commonly accepted that rural communities will be economically crippled and cut off from everyday opportunities without access to high-speed, affordable and redundant broadband Internet service.
- Chaffee County's service is not high speed, redundant (one backhoe mishap and we're all offline) or for some, affordable (100's times more than the Front Range).
- Chaffee County has an urgent need for improved broadband services for our businesses, including higher speeds (e.g. Sangre de Cristo), improved access (e.g. Monarch Ski Area, Mt Princeton Hot Springs) and redundancy (all businesses).
- SOLUTION: ChaffeeConnect is an initiative of the Chaffee County EDC. We have organized a team of local business and community leaders to create a plan to provide reliable and affordable Internet access through private broadband service providers.
- FACT: "Basic broadband", as defined by the FCC in 2010, is download speeds to your computer of 4 Mbps and 1 Mbps upload from your computer. Many of our businesses and residents don't have this level of basic broadband service available today.
- The team is compiling the speeds and services available in Chaffee County. We are asking everyone to take a broadband survey (<http://www.colorado.gov/oit/broadband>) developed by the Governors Office of Information Technology **by September 30**. The results will feed into the long-term plan.
- FACT: The latest National Telecommunications and Information Administration statistics show a 7% lag in broadband adoption in rural areas as compared to urban areas after controlling for socioeconomic factors.¹
- There is no quick or cheap fix to this problem. To ensure economic viability of providing higher-speed broadband service, we need to maximize business and individual signups so providers are willing to come to the county with solutions.
- FACT: A 2008 Research Report funded by the USDA found that rural broadband adoption was affected not by demographics, but by not understanding the benefits, not being able to see those benefits firsthand and not feeling comfortable when using Internet services. All issues amenable to local education efforts.²
- SOLUTION: In parallel, we will work with existing education networks to educate businesses and individuals so they understand the benefits of improved broadband service and are knowledgeable about the online tools and opportunities it can facilitate.

¹ http://www.ntia.doc.gov/files/ntia/publications/esa_ntia_us_broadband_adoption_report_11082010_1.pdf

² http://www.actelis.com/library/BBS_closing-bb-gap.pdf