



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE COUNTY SURVEY AIDS BROADBAND EXPANSION

Uniontown, PA – Fayette officials are dedicated to the continued expansion of broadband internet access across the entire county.

Now, county residents are invited to participate in the expansion process through a survey administered by the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission's Regional Broadband Task Force.

"Essentially, the intent of this project is to learn where the gap areas are in our county, which will facilitate our abilities to secure future funding for expanding broadband capabilities in the eight-county region," Fayette County Chief Community Development Specialist Arthur J. Cappella said.

Fayette and neighboring Westmoreland County were recently added to an existing, six-county, regional comprehensive plan called Alleghenies Ahead. The plan identified broadband connectivity as a critical issue in Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset counties.

As a result of the regional comprehensive plan, the SAPD Commission created its task force to identify funding resources and deployment solutions to improve connectivity for residents and businesses in the entire region.

Last year, the commission received a grant to coordinate a feasibility study for all eight counties, in order to inventory existing broadband assets, identify service gaps and conduct the county surveys.

Cappella said the county commissioners have enthusiastically agreed to be part of the project, with the county's Office of Planning, Zoning and Community Development facilitating Fayette's involvement and meeting the \$6,250 ARC match requirement. Fayette's contribution was combined with identical contributions from the other counties, totaling \$50,000.

The SAPD Commission's overall goal is to ensure all citizens and businesses have access to affordable, adequate, broadband internet through improved infrastructure. The results of the survey will be used to support future grant applications.

"Participating will make the job of county planners a lot easier. We can't be everywhere our citizens are. Therefore, it is particularly important and imperative that we get their feedback," Cappella said. "For this project to work, we need to be as accurate and detailed in our data collection as possible. It's really the only way we can know for sure what our needs are."

To participate in the 5-minute broadband internet survey, visit www.tinyurl.com/BroadbandHOME for residents, or www.tinyurl.com/BroadbandBiz for businesses.

For more information, contact Stacy LoCastro of the SAPD Commission at broadband@sapdc.org or 814-949-6510.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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