APACHE COUNTY BROADBAND KICKOFF MEETING

Joy Whiting, Apache County School Superintendent, recently hosted a Broadband Kickoff Event to celebrate the $11.5M award of the Arizona Broadband Development Grant. Superintendent Whiting spearheaded the project and addressed event attendees saying, "It has been such a privilege to work with so many high-level people on this project as we move forward into an exciting new era for Apache County." Local community leaders attended the event and included: Apache County District III Supervisor Nelson Davis; Presiding Superior Court Judge Michael Latham; School Superintendents Kyle Patterson of St. Johns Unified School District, David Embrey of Concho Elementary School District, and Shad Housley of Vernon Elementary School District; Mayor Shelly Reidhead of Springerville; Mayor Bryce Hamblin of Eagar; Mayor Spence Udall of St. Johns; Keith Watkins and Sandip Bhowmick of the Arizona Commerce Authority; Michele Ralston from Senator Mark Kelly's office; representatives of SRP and TEP; and the

Community Broadband Advocates team. In partnership with Commnet, Apache County leadership is constructing a fiber optic based broadband system that will provide high speed internet to homes and businesses in Apache County, including the communities of St. Johns, Springerville, Eagar, Alpine, Nutrioso, Greer, Vernon, and Concho. This $11.5 million project will be built with funds from the Broadband Development Grant provided by the Arizona Commerce Authority, as well as matching funds from Commnet Arizona, Salt River Project, and Tucson Electric Power Company. This critical infrastructure is vital to helping the area move from a coal-based economy to a technology-based economy, which is essential for the area to compete now and into the future. This grant was obtained through the combined efforts of Apache County, Community Broadband Advocates, SRP and TEP. The project will be completed in phases and is expected to be finished within the next few years.

"OUR KIDS, THEIR FUTURE."