

THE UM SYSTEM BROADBAND INITIATIVE

-by Lav Gupta

State of Broadband in Missouri

- ❖ Missouri Ranks 41st in broadband penetration among all states in the USA.
- ❖ About 20% of the State's population cannot connect to broadband Internet.
- ❖ This translates to ~1.26 million Missourians not having access to healthcare appointments, virtual education, electronic transactions, telecommuting and connecting with family during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

State, datasets, economic opportunity etc.

<https://apps.cares.missouri.edu/portal/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=d4a2252250db472e985a6ead1a1d4ed7>

Broadband Initiative - Inception

- ❖ This initiative began in 2019 to support efforts to provide high-speed Internet to all Missourians
- ❖ A Broadband Leadership Team was formed to advance UM System's role in improving broadband access
- ❖ The team first focused on Bollinger County where less than 2% of 12000 residents have broadband connections! Watch this video to see what it means to them
- ❖ Covid-19 has raised the sense of urgency for this project

https://youtu.be/rnnDVTMV_OQ?t=13



The Missouri Broadband Rail

- ❖ The Leadership Team created, in partnership with CARES and SourceLink, the Missouri Broadband Rail, a resource navigator that provides a systematic way to find and organize tools and partners in support of community working to expanding access.
- ❖ This is how the initiative seeks to empower people

www.mobroadband.org

<https://extension.missouri.edu/news/um-broadband-initiative-connecting-and-empowering-communities-4957>



Work in Progress

- ❖ **July 2020:** Broadband Leadership Team hosted the "Bringing Broadband to a Missouri Community" workshop with focus on Bollinger Country, MO. More than 100 stakeholders participated. The workshop resulted in an actionable plan for that county. **My humble contribution:** <https://blogs.umsl.edu/news/2020/07/13/broadband-initiative-lav-gupta/>
- ❖ **Spring 2021:** Planned launch of The Broadband Planning Guide for community members to develop an RFP for partners and services as they work to enhance and expand broadband connectivity in their areas. This includes an economics benefit study done by UM Exceed

<https://apps.cares.missouri.edu/portal/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=190cbdb47976429fbb649e3a3051c0d7>



We are making progress but there is still a lot to do. We have valuable partnerships with Missouri Farm Bureau, the Departments of Agriculture and Economic Development, and the Missouri Chamber of Commerce, to name a few.



Explore the Missouri Broadband Resource Rail, follow the development of the Broadband Planning Guide and share these resources with others in your networks.