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Fiber optics built for the Commonwealth

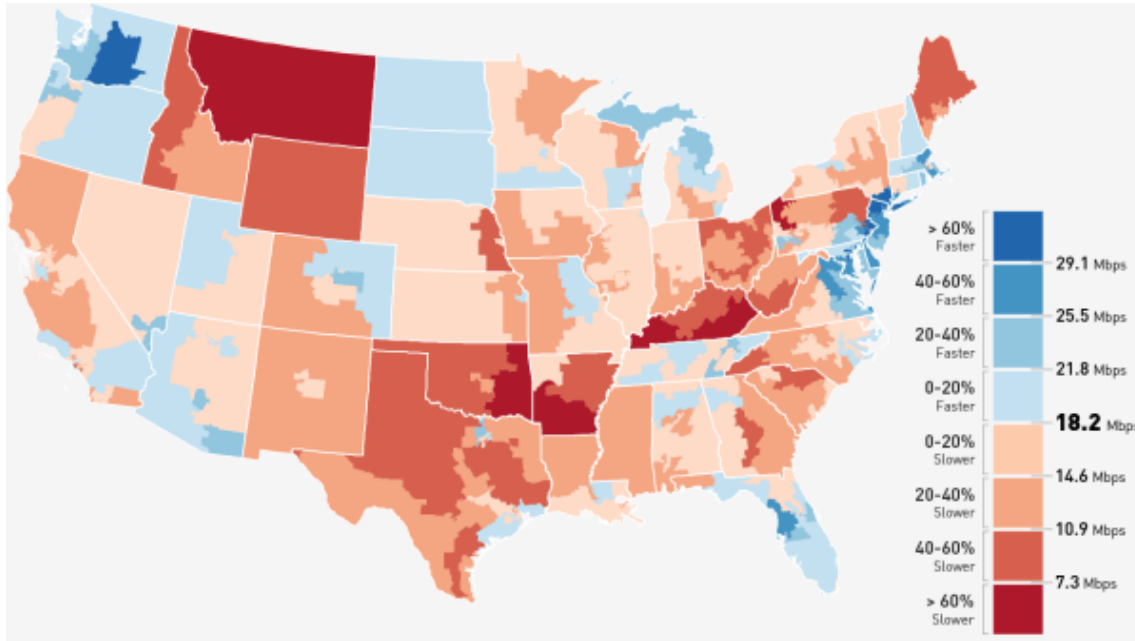# Closing the Digital Divide

David Flessas – CEO - Accelecom

RURAL KENTUCKY – BROADBAND CHALLENGES

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Kentucky, due to rurality, historically ranked at or near the bottom broadband availability surveys. Two main factors have contributed to these rankings: High build costs, resulting in high monthly costs, and lack of competition.

Average broadband speeds at the onset of the KentuckyWired project.

Legend:
- \> 60% Faster — 29.1 Mbps
- 40-60% Faster — 25.5 Mbps
- 20-40% Faster — 21.8 Mbps
- 0-20% Faster — 18.2 Mbps
- 0-20% Slower — 14.6 Mbps
- 20-40% Slower — 10.9 Mbps
- 40-60% Slower — 7.3 Mbps
- \> 60% Slower

Kentucky districts averaged at the bottom or near bottom in all districts.

- In 2013, there was a push for reliable, accessible high-speed broadband in underserved areas from the SOAR initiative, created by then Governor Steve Beshear and Congressman Hal Rogers.

- The Commonwealth's Finance and Administration Cabinet started to research the best way to obtain improved internet access, speed, capacity, affordability and reliability.

- The cabinet issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking potential partners and their capacity to provide enhanced services.

- It was determined that a public-private partnership (P3) was the best approach.

- The Commonwealth entered into a contract with Macquarie Capital to design, build operate and maintain the KentuckyWired network. OpenFiber Kentucky d/b/a Accelecom was formed to manage the network.

- This was a multi-year, multi-hundred million-dollar project that brought a single fiber network into every single county in the Commonwealth.

RURAL BROADBAND

Pixabay

- KentuckyWired is a middle mile network. Think of it as an interstate highway system that connects communities to the internet or other communities.

- Accelecom is providing the exit ramps to those communities and ultimately providing the last mile into these rural locations.

- Though KCNA, the state services certain state agencies. Accelecom is providing access to everyone else.

- The network has 6 geo-redundant fiber rings.

- The backbone consists of 3200 miles of 288 fiber strands.

- "State-of-the-art" is not a throw away!

- Today, there are 30,000 businesses in Kentucky considered within 1,500 feet of the network, or "near-net".

Kentucky Success

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Kentucky's historically bad broadband footprint has been replaced with a nationwide leader.

In its first year alone, the KentuckyWired network, through Acclecom, has seen agreements entered to bring dedicated fiber internet service to 5 major hospitals, 80+ Federally Qualified Health Clinics(FQHCs), over 40 County Health Departments and several dozen rural clinics. 95% of these locations qualify as rural areas.

- CRD – Center for Rural Development
  - Accelecom, through the KentuckyWired network, has worked with the CRD to provide low-cost, high-bandwidth gigabit internet services to 30+ County Health Departments within CRD's region.

- KPCA – Kentucky Primary Care Association
  - Accelecom partnered with the KPCA and is providing, or will soon provide, low-cost, high-bandwidth internet services to over 80 member clinics.

The Center for Rural Development

KPCA KENTUCKY PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION

The Future is Bright

Utilizing the KentuckyWired network via the partnership between Accelecom and the state of Kentucky, rural healthcare organizations will benefit heavily from the increased access to high-speed bandwidth.

Nobody will need less bandwidth in the future as healthcare applications become more and more bandwidth intensive.

Connecting healthcare organizations with ubiquitous and consistent service offerings is certain to increase the health and quality of life of Kentuckians.

As telehealth becomes more prominent, reliable, high-speed connectivity becomes more critical.

On The Horizon

Utilizing the KentuckyWired network, Accelecom is planning to introduce groundbreaking offerings to Kentucky Healthcare organizations.

- Today, through Accelecom, healthcare organizations can connect to the internet and their own locations. Tomorrow, both urban and rural Kentucky healthcare organizations will have access to a private, exclusive, fiber-optic network built to connect key healthcare facilities both to the internet and each other. This will be unique to Kentucky as no other fiber network in the nation can connect every county in a single state. This will provide the needed bandwidth to support telehealth and other bandwidth-intensive applications.

- Coupled with network and internet services, we'll be adding a robust telehealth platform to pair with the needed bandwidth provided by our internet services, giving rural healthcare organizations a fully operational telehealth platform utilizing our robust fiber network.

Thank you!

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