

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

KENTUCKY COUNTY LEADERS AND CNX, A KENTUCKY-BASED BROADBAND CONSULTING FIRM, UNVEIL SOUTHEASTERN KENTUCKY FINAL MILE (SKY FM) BROADBAND FIBER PLAN IN FIRST STEP TO EXPAND HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND ACROSS CLAY, KNOTT, LESLIE, LETCHER AND PERRY COUNTIES

Thacker-Grigsby and TVS Cable announced the city of Hazard is now a “Gig City” and network upgrades now permit 50-meg download speed to many homes in Perry County.

November 21, 2016 - Hazard, Kentucky-- The Southeastern Kentucky Final Mile (SKY FM) broadband fiber planning project, which kicked off earlier this summer, culminated today with the release of a broadband action plan-- the first step in expanding high-speed broadband across Clay, Knott, Leslie, Letcher and Perry Counties. This plan helps communities identify priorities in anticipation of the KentuckyWired middle mile fiber network—plans for how to expand networks and use them more effectively.

Congressman Hal Rogers supports the county leaders’ efforts to bring broadband to southeastern Kentucky. “I want to commend the leaders of southeastern Kentucky for this insightful and important plan to expand high-speed and high-capacity broadband to the mountains. We have lost more than 11,000 coal mining jobs in our regions since 2009, so this broadband network is key to diversifying our economy and revitalizing our communities.”

The plan, authored by Kentucky-based Connected Nation Exchange (CNX), was unveiled on the campus of Hazard Community and Technical College before a diverse group of interested public and private sector representatives, engaged citizens and elected officials from across the five-county area.

Highlights from the plan include:

- A detailed accounting of where each county stands in terms of existing connectivity and a more precise understanding of areas underserved by broadband.
- Information collected throughout the course of the project from concerned citizens, public and private sector representatives, and others participating in the self-assessment and planning effort across the five-county region over the last several months.
- Challenges and opportunities faced by various sectors of the communities, and an analysis of the issues presenting barriers to growth in broadband access, adoption, and use.
- Information from providers regarding their planned network expansions.

- A blueprint, or action plan, for community broadband success based on the self-assessment, information collected, practices that garnered success for other communities, and the resulting shared vision for solving broadband challenges and making best use of broadband opportunities, including the KentuckyWired project.

A goal of the SKY FM project is to enable public-private partnerships that expand high-speed fiber broadband access to homes, schools, hospitals, businesses, public buildings, industrial parks, and other critical structures in rural southeastern Kentucky.

In connection with this first step of developing an informed plan, Thacker-Grigsby Communications/TVS Cable, shared its most recent upgrades within Perry County to a welcoming and appreciative audience.

“We are excited to be working with the SKY FM project as we strive continually to improve our network,” said David Thacker, Technical Operations Manager of Thacker-Grigsby Communications/TVS Cable. “The SKY FM project has allowed us to interface with local leaders and make adjustments to service based on customer demand. We are excited to have recently announced that Hazard is now as a ‘Gig City’ with gigabit fiber connectivity available to all locations in Hazard. We have made network upgrades that have allowed us to increase to 50 meg download speeds to many of our Perry County customers.”

Perry County Judge Executive Scott Alexander is encouraged by the outcomes of the SKY FM planning effort. “We are thrilled to witness now, firsthand, the fruits of this planning exercise and our public-private collaborative efforts as Thacker-Grigsby and TVS Cable announces gigabit fiber connectivity to all locations here in Hazard,” said Alexander. “To be recognized as a ‘Gig City’ and to have 50 meg download speeds offered to many Perry County residents provides us with additional tools to compete for good-paying, 21st century jobs. Much work remains, however, to capitalize on this vital resource as we continue to expand coverage in underserved portions of our County and work to improve adoption rates; but this announcement as we conclude our planning portion of this effort is extremely encouraging and allows us to take a giant step forward together for the good of our citizens.”

The participants in the SKY FM project hope this first step of an informed plan and the initiative observed by providers within Perry County will lead to the expansion and construction of additional fiber networks across the five-county area and serve as a working model for use across the Commonwealth and nation, as states and cities are increasing investments in broadband-capable infrastructure and related assets.

“Kentucky communities have an unprecedented opportunity to make their communities Gigabit cities and counties,” according to CNX CEO Brian Mefford. “The Commonwealth’s investment in a high capacity fiber backbone that will provide connection points in all 120 Kentucky counties means that broadband can expand in places that previously were too costly for a private sector business case. In true public-private partnership fashion, KentuckyWired is creating a better business case for broadband investment statewide.”

Those interested can access the SKY FM fiber broadband plan on CNX's website, www.kentuckywiredhelp.com.

The project was awarded a state grant from the Kentucky Communications Network Authority (KCNA).

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About CNX

Through its unique software platform and public-private partnership know-how, CNX bridges the divide as a broker between cities and states desiring to expand broadband and the private companies that seek to invest in broadband networks. The CNX industry-leading platform aggregates all relevant public sector asset data to support public-private transactions that allow companies faster speed to market and higher impact for deployed capital, focusing on solutions for fiber construction, small cell and 5g wireless.

CNX offers technical, financial, legal, and operational expertise to implement geo-relevant public-private partnerships that solve broadband access challenges and expand the network effect for the good of all. We operate as a cross functional integrated solutions team, providing expertise that bridges the divide between the public and private sectors in order to get deals done and accelerate time to market for network investment.

More information at www.cnx.io.

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