

STATE: ARKANSAS

Date of Report: February 18, 2007

Nature of report (preliminary, final, advisory, executive/legislative): Arkansas Broadband Advisory Council Initial Report – submitted to highlight the urgent need for Arkansas to identify funding to begin phase 1 of the Connect Arkansas broadband plan to maintain the momentum initiated by the Governor and the Legislature with the passage of the Connect Arkansas Broadband Act in March 2007.

Key recommendations:

- First priority - Arkansas needs statewide broadband access
(Note: broadband is defined as 384 kbps in either direction)
- Arkansas needs statewide broadband training for its people
(The training will create demand for private providers to install broadband infrastructure)
- Second priority - Arkansas must address its broadband standing in the U.S. and the world

Key programs initiated:

- Connect Arkansas, a non-profit organization, established in statute to
 - Prepare the people and businesses to secure the economic, educational, health, social and other benefits available via broadband use
 - Facilitate the availability of broadband service to every home and business
 - Facilitate broadband education for all citizens and businesses
 - Facilitate the availability of broadband services to broadband educated citizens in every home and business by the end of year 2012
- Arkansas Broadband Advisory Council created to:
 - Monitor the broadband based development efforts of other states & nations
 - Advise the Governor and the Legislature on policies related to affordable broadband service to every home and business

Recommended appropriation:

Phase I \$750,000 for broadband mapping and broadband education of citizens and business (1/3 to 1/2 of this amount to be used for mapping only)

Web link to agency or task force:

<http://www.broadbandadvisorycouncil.arkansas.gov/>
<http://www.connect-arkansas.org>

ARKANSAS (cont.)

Statement of Values:

- Arkansas needs statewide broadband access and statewide broadband training for its people in order to fully participate in the electronic commerce of the U.S. and the world and its children need broadband access to have technology equity with the rest of the world.

Where we've been:

N/A

Where we are today:

- Arkansas is 47th among the states in broadband telecommunications according to the 2007 State New Economy Index
- Arkansas is 42nd among the states with a median download speed of 1.33 mbps
- 29% of the population has never used the internet.
- South and Northeast Arkansas have the lowest broadband usage patterns, while Northwest and Central Arkansas have the highest usage patterns.
- Over 50% of households, with an income of less than \$30,000, have never used the internet. As household income increases, however, there is a significant increase in the use of the internet.
- 51% do not have broadband service, while another 7% were unsure of what broadband, or high speed internet access, meant.
- Even if broadband was affordable and was made available to every household in Arkansas, 30% would not subscribe to the service.
- Of the population that had access to broadband, 74% thought the rates charged were reasonable.

Where we want to be:

- Every broadband educated citizen and business will have broadband (384 kbps minimum) access by the end of year 2012

How are we going to get there?

- Develop maps of broadband infrastructure in the state to determine gaps
- Establish broadband educational programs for citizens and business to increase awareness of the importance, need and value of broadband access
- Broadband educated citizens and business will drive demand and provide incentive for providers to install broadband infrastructure
- Monitor and coordinate broadband deployment in the state

Broadband functionality (tiers of service)

N/A