How would affordable Ultra-High Speed Fiber-Optic Internet serving every home in Dade County benefit the community?

What is Ultra-High Speed Fiber-Optic Internet?

The 2014 Farm Bill defines Ultra High Speed Internet as Internet service offered with a download rate of 1 gigabit per second. That is about 50-100 times faster than the currently fastest advertised speeds *anywhere* Dade County. That is the same speed Google Fiber and other companies are offering in a few select big cities.

The Dade County Fiber Project proposes to build a fiber-optic network that would be capable of offering 1gagabit or even faster speeds to every home in Dade County.

How much benefit does broadband bring to citizens, businesses, and communities?

From March 2014 *Broadband Communities*

> Recent U.S. surveys by SNG indicate that more than 75 percent of home business owners, including those that do not currently have broadband access, say broadband access is essential to operate their businesses. Close to 30 percent of home business owners strongly agree they would have to relocate to get broadband access if it were not available. This has clear implications for attracting and retaining households in communities.
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> The same SNG findings suggest that a third of teleworkers strongly agree they would not have their current jobs if they were not able to telework, and more than one-fifth strongly agree that their ability to telework has helped them avoid relocation for employment. As a result, almost 30 percent strongly agree that they spend more within the community by working from home. Where teleworking occurs, it contributes to additional employment within these communities, enabling people to live and work in their community of choice. More than 44 percent say that teleworking is very important for opening up more employment opportunities, and 73 percent cite improved life-work balance as a very important benefit of teleworking.
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> Because of all its benefits to households, broadband is a significant factor in attracting and retaining populations and households in communities. More than 30 percent of households say that they would definitely or very likely relocate to another community to get broadband services. Broadband, in this context, becomes a tool for business recruitment as well as for attracting newcomers in a world where individuals can literally choose to work and live anywhere. Broadband, therefore, is an important tool in a community's sustainability strategy.

Information Access

> Learning a new skill, language, or completing an online course, or just googling something you heard about!

Economic Development

> Ultra High Speed Internet accelerates business development, and provides new opportunities for innovation, expansion, and e-commerce. Communities that connect their residents create wealth and attract business investments.

Healthcare

>   Telemedicine enables improved health care by allowing rural health clinics to communicate with specailists and get test results faster.

>   Remote Health Monitoring allows seniors to live more independently in their own homes.

Education

>   Research, learning, and communication between parents and teachers are some of the benefits of Ultra High Speed Internet. Teachers can supplement course materials with interactive online material.

Energy Conservation

>   SmartGrid technology enables homeowners to monitor energy usage in realtime, and adjust usage patterns to save energy costs.

Entertainment

>   Hardworking folks need to relax some times too. Ultra High Speed Internet puts a plethora of entertainment options at your fingertips- streaming music, streaming video, and even online gaming!

I have highlighted only some of the benefits of Ultra High Speed Internet. Share your own reason for wanting Ultra High Speed Internet with us at DadeCountyFiber.org! As access to better Internet increases, new uses and benefits are sure to be created!

Is it possible?

Short Answer? YES!

With hardwork and participation by the community, we can build this network!

There are a few options available for financing, **none of which would require any increase in taxes.** Let me repeat- **NO INCRESE IN TAXES! :)**

The best possibility open right now is the FCC Connect America Rural Broadband Experiments. This program will use money from the Universal Service Fund to extend broadband access in rural communities. We may be eligible for funding, and our application is due the middle of October.

Even with Connect America Funds, we will have to work together as a community to keep the costs low and make the network affordable to everyone.

Other options for funding include the USDA Rural Utility Service loan program, the 2014 Farm Bill Rural Broadband Experiments, and issuing community bonds or Cooperative Shares or other similar financing. We will also seek grants and donations.

What do we need to do to make it happen?

We need to work together as a community. Access to rights of way, easements and other property access will be necessary. We need volunteers to help promote the network and to contribute time and talents in fund-raising efforts.

We need a variety of services, from professional services like engineering, legal, and accounting, to basic tasks that we can train you on like mapping or distributing flyers.

Whatever your talents, abilities, or interests, we can use your help!

Visit DadeCountyFiber.org and join us in making Dade County a Gigabit County!

We are especially in need of Advisory Board Members to direct our work! Would you like to volunteer?

Community Organization

I have envisioned the Dade County Fiber Project to be a community organization or association. The community should be in control of their own broadband network, not some corporation.

What are your thoughts?

Here are some options under Federal Law:

Cooperative Model (501(c)(12)- The Cooperative model has worked reasonably well for providing rural electric service, and in some cases, telephone service. A cooperative is owned by the people it serves. Missouri's new Cooperative Law allows greater flexibility in the way cooperatives are formed.

501(c)(3) Nonprofit Corporation- it can be difficult to get 501(3)c status for a company that competes directly with for profit enterprises, but there is a significant educational and charitable mission to be filled by providing broadband access.

Fraternal Society [501(c)(10) or 501(c)(8)]- Fraternal Societies have played an important role in civic society for many centuries. A 501(c)(10) organization can offer a great deal of freedom and even a fraternal aspect. While this may be a very creative and unexpected option, I am sort of partial to the idea. A 501(c)(8) organization has to offer some sort of insurance product like life insurance, so we probably won't go down that road :)

501(c)(4) Civic League- perhaps know best for use by political organizations :) But it could work for us too!

For Profit LLC or Corporation- this would not give us any tax benefits, and it would be necessary to restrict operating powers in the Articles of Organization or Charter to force the company to act in the interest of the community.

<u>We also need to decide how to organize under state Law:</u>

General Corporation or LLC
Cooperative Company(Ch. 357 RsMo)
Cooperative Association (Ch. 351.1000)

It does not appear we can qualify under Ch 352 or 355 RsMo.

We could form under another state and register to do business in MO.

I would like to form a committee (Advisory Board) to review these and other issues. Would you like to volunteer?

If so, email *jlv@ensigntech.com*