

2014 TASK FORCE REPORT **CONNECTIVITY**

The Connectivity Task Force was formed in 2007 to represent the constantly changing needs of the 21st century tri-states. The quality and condition of being connected via broadband is vital to our economic well-being. Broadband creates jobs. It enhances quality of life, lowers energy costs, enhances educational programs and saves lives through telemedicine.

The goal of the Connectivity Task Force is to make broadband accessible and affordable throughout the tri-state region so that everyone may reap its benefits. Broadband connectivity is crucial to keeping the tri-states competitive in a global market. National studies show that access to broadband connectivity is one of the top 5 factors when making site location and expansion decisions.

According to a report by the Public Policy Institute of California in 2010, communities that increased the number of broadband providers between 1999 and 2006 had faster job growth than the rest of the country. A major contributing factor to company expansion or relocation is whether a community can provide high-speed data service.



2013/2014 Focus Areas:

- Collect and verify current data on broadband availability and service to understand the current broadband climate in the region
- Create maps and information resources for the 35-county summit region
- Analyze short and long-term needs
- Leverage existing partnerships among providers and develop new partnerships
- Identify potential strategic directions and develop timelines, goals and metrics
- Speak with a unified, regional voice to advocate for the extension of broadband service to all areas of the tri-state region
- Evaluate redundant service throughout the tri-state region to ensure that any service outage does not disrupt the ongoing needs of regional manufacturers, medical facilities and all other businesses

Collaborative Efforts

Broadband connectivity is a crucial element to the tri-state region remaining globally competitive in the 21st century. By working together, the Connectivity Task Force's goal is to increase broadband accessibility. The Task Force brings together representatives from Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development organizations, broadband suppliers and private business to speak with one voice.

This initiative includes educating the public on the benefits of using high speed connections as well as creating a business-friendly broadband environment in order to attract new, high quality companies that bring jobs and investment to the region. It is the mission of the Connectivity Task Force to stress that the information highway infrastructure is as important to the future of the 35-county region as the highway system that moves goods and services throughout the region.