



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gilpin and Clear Creek Counties Share Broadband Study Results, Look Towards Next Steps in Improving Service

Oct. 20, 2017 – **Clear Creek County Communications, Colo.** – Gilpin and Clear Creek Counties are sharing the results of their joint Broadband study—known as the ‘Strategic Broadband Plan’. Begun more than a year ago by their consultant, NEO Connect, the process involved speed/demographics surveys, stakeholder meetings, research into mapping and existing assets (reported Broadband speeds), local service provider information/input, and preliminary design/engineering in regards to strategies and plans. While much of the nation continues to expand Broadband speeds and infrastructure, both Clear Creek and Gilpin counties’ surveys and research indicated they continue to struggle with varying degrees of speed, access, costs and reliability.

From the survey, a majority of Clear Creek and Gilpin County residents had speed tests recorded that were below the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) minimum broadband threshold (25 Mbps download, 3 Mbps upload). For Gilpin, 165 residents and 29 businesses responded to the survey, while Clear Creek had 237 residents and 33 businesses respond, respectively.

“While these results weren’t surprising to anyone, the data collected helps us identify those trouble spots and potential solutions throughout both counties,” said John Bottomley, Clear Creek County IT Director and lead for the joint broadband steering committee.

This initiative, funded primarily with a Department of Local Affairs grant, looked at the current Broadband services available within both counties and ways to improve them—including costs associated with potential solutions.

As part of the study and final recommendations, NEO identified known infrastructure, such as anchor institutions (schools, government buildings, current and planned communications towers, etc.). They also looked at the financial implications of fiber design to homes and businesses, and what those costs might be—to include business plans and strategies each county could use to help their specific needs/areas. This could include engaging local and regional communications providers, and looking at resources such as public-private partnerships, Federal and State grants, and other funding options.

“This study really gives us a baseline to go forward with, and some good estimates of costs and suggested projects we may want to consider,” said Randy Wheelock, Clear Creek County Commissioner.

One of the main recommendations in the study was to connect those known anchor institutions throughout both counties, essentially completing the “middle mile infrastructure”. Connecting these anchors can reduce costs of private internet service providers for these buildings and areas, and make the costs of extending “the last mile”, or fiber to the premise, substantially lower (due to the middle mile piece connecting established anchor institutions).

Both counties are continuing to look at options in enhancing broadband services to residents and businesses.

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For more information, call John Bryan, Communications Director, at 303-679-2307, or email: jbryan@co.clear-creek.co.us.

Or, go to the Official Clear Creek County website: <http://www.co.clear-creek.co.us/> (click on the ‘Broadband’ tab)

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