

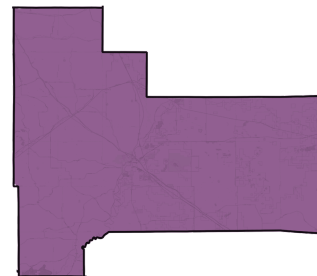
EXPAND BROADBAND UPDATE

Vol. I, No. 4, November 2024

New issues released the 1st Tuesday of the month



Jackson
County



Backhaul Fiber Prepares for Conduit Installation

FIBER

Fiber sites City Point West and Millston North are connected to essential power and network sources and will go live when backhaul connections are ready. Teams are preparing to install fiber in underground conduit at these backhaul connections.

FIXED WIRELESS

On our latest Community Report maps, we've done a little housekeeping and have labeled five fixed wireless sites "Other" to indicate other Bug Tussel assets: Bell Mound, Hixton, Millston, Northfield, and Price.

Inquire about getting connected to Bug Tussel internet service at [877-227-0924](tel:877-227-0924) or btussel.com. To see county maps, visit btussel.com/reports.

**May not be pictured in the current Community Report due to a range of factors:*

- *Community Reports are updated quarterly; new additions, revisions, or status updates may not be reflected in the latest report.*
- *Fiber route segments are separated into optical line terminals (OLTs); new additions, revisions, or status updates for a smaller portion of an OLT may not be depicted in reports.*

Opinion: Most BEAD Money Won't Hit Until 2026

"I think the majority of [BEAD] funding will hit the streets in 2026," says Jade Piros de Carvalho, VP of Broadband Advocacy and Partnerships with Bonfire. De Carvalho explains the timeline for BEAD Program funding is still uncertain, with some states potentially awarding funds by fall 2025, while the majority of funds may not be distributed until 2026. States like Louisiana are aiming for spring 2025 project starts, though final approvals and preparations are complex. The process is lengthy, with public comment periods and state-specific approvals.

Source: fierce-network.com

Did You Know?

Small Providers & More Fiber Helps Rural Economies

Fiber broadband drives 213% more business growth and 18% income gains, aligning with BEAD’s focus on fiber infrastructure.

Source: telecompetitor.com

Fiber Growth Fastest In U.S. History

Fiber connections now reach over 50% of U.S. locations, marking it as the fastest-growing fixed network in U.S. history.

Source: broadbandbreakfast.com



Benchmark Study Finds “Resilience Despite Challenges” Among Rural Telcos in 2023

The 2023 Forvis Mazars Rural Telecom Study highlights industry resilience, with 157 companies receiving \$950 million in grants—a 50% increase over 2022’s \$600 million.

Source: telecompetitor.com

NTCA CEO Defends BEAD Timeline

Shirley Bloomfield, CEO of NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association, explained that she’s not concerned about the BEAD timeline. Bloomfield named two primary reasons why the BEAD funding process so far has been worth the time spent. The first is the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) mapping process. “The mapping was really important,” Bloomfield said. She understands the time involved — why it took a year to create the original map after Congress funded the FCC’s mapping project, and why the challenges that arose after its release were necessary.

“I think the worst thing that could have happened is if they had rushed out the door and just started making multimillion-dollar investments to areas that already had broadband, or if they had underestimated the unserved areas. I think they were being prudent.”

In addition to appreciating the complexity of the FCC’s mapping process — even while identifying its problems — Bloomfield thinks fiscal responsibility is another reason it’s reasonable for the speed of BEAD funding to be slower. The investment in the BEAD Program is an exercise in public trust, Bloomfield says. “Who wants to explain to policymakers in five years why we rushed, and why this community had three different sets of federal funding coming into it but the people there still have no broadband? That, to me, is the worst-case scenario.”

Bloomfield says she’s confident that, despite the delays and the complaints about BEAD funding speed within the industry, states are still eager to have the funds.

Source: telecompetitor.com

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