

PROMOTING BROADBAND IN MONTANA

“E-connectivity is fundamental for economic development, innovation, advancements in technology, workforce readiness, and an improved quality of life. Reliable and affordable high-speed internet connectivity will transform rural America as a key catalyst for prosperity.”

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Purdue. October, 2017

**OVER
\$100 MILLION
INVESTED
EVERY YEAR**

MTA member companies invest over \$100 million every year in CAPEX and OPEX to build and operate Montana’s rural broadband infrastructure—despite the challenges of large operating expenses and small customer base. Without external support, investment in broadband infrastructure in rural Montana—and rural America—is unsustainable.

WHAT OTHER STATES ARE DOING

TAX INCENTIVES

Property tax relief for investing in high-speed broadband services; eliminate central assessment and locally tax only land and buildings.

Fund last-mile and middle-mile CAPEX; minimum speeds; sustainable service; private sector leadership; matching funds; overbuild restrictions; focus on unserved and under-served areas; leverage existing networks.

BROADBAND GRANTS AND LOANS

STATE UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

Augment existing programs to support broadband investment in unserved and under-served areas; use fees from broadband connections, voice service revenues or a combination/hybrid; provide support based on cost-of-service, economic models, or a combination/hybrid; ensure that the beneficiaries of broadband infrastructure contribute equitably to state funding mechanisms.

The FCC has relaxed regulatory barriers for wireless facility siting and is seeking comment on additional removal of regulatory barriers. States have adopted policies including cost-based access to rights-of-way; shot clocks for permitting; equitable pole attachment rates; cost-based railroad right-of-way charges; dig once, etc.

REMOVING BARRIERS TO BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT

BROADBAND ACTION PLANS

Common elements include: ubiquitous statewide broadband by 20XX; local public and/or private contribution; leverage existing infrastructure; applicants must demonstrate financial, technical and management strength and long-term sustainability; no funding for infrastructure in areas already served; private deployment is preferable to government-owned network infrastructure; remove barriers to broadband deployment—e.g., permitting fees and delays; partnerships; share best practices.

