



# GOVERNOR PARSON ANNOUNCES \$400 MILLION PLAN TO IMPROVE BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE IN MISSOURI

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*AUGUST 19, 2021*

**JEFFERSON CITY** — Today, during a press conference at the Missouri State Fair hosted by the Missouri Farm Bureau, Governor Mike Parson announced plans to deploy more than \$400 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to increase broadband internet access, adoption, and assistance statewide.

“Investing in our broadband infrastructure is critical to unlocking our full economic potential in this state and will serve Missourians for generations to come,” **Governor Parson** said. “We expect this investment to increase broadband internet connectivity and access in every corner of the state for hundreds of thousands of Missourians. Quality internet supports learning, health care, business, and agriculture in today’s economy, and we are excited to capitalize on this opportunity to truly make a difference and improve lives.”

The plan was developed through a multi-agency effort designed to address a diverse range of broadband connectivity challenges and is expected to impact hundreds of thousands of Missouri families. The plan will be presented to the Missouri General Assembly in January for appropriation.

In addition to the \$400 million plan, the Department of Economic Development also submitted an application to the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Infrastructure Program requesting an additional \$56 million for broadband deployment. If approved by NTIA, this funding could support up to 19 projects, connecting more than 17,000 households, businesses, and other institutions.

“In combination, these investments would be a game changer for broadband in Missouri,” said **Tim Arbeiter, Director of Broadband Development for the Department of Economic Development**. “This unprecedented level of funding could unlock incredible new potential as we shape the strategy for broadband development in our state.”

According to the Federal Communications Commission, more than 147,000 households or almost 400,000 Missourians don’t have access to high-speed Internet (25mpbs/3mbps). The majority of those citizens reside in rural communities.

“Broadband availability and job creation go hand in hand,” said **Department of Economic Development Director Rob Dixon**. “Having access to this critical infrastructure is essential for employers of all shapes and sizes across our state. Connecting more Missouri communities will help level the playing field for rural and urban communities alike.”

“Students depend on the internet to further their education and to better prepare for the jobs of the future,” said **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Margie Vandeven**. “We are grateful for this state-level commitment to addressing the digital divide and its impact on students across our state.”

“We’ve made great strides in bringing broadband to Missouri’s farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses, but there is more work to do,” said **Department of Agriculture Director Chris Chinn**. “It is important that every last mile is connected to high-speed internet. This funding is another step to help ensure that all parts of the state have access to the technology they need.”

“This plan is a significant investment in Missouri’s broadband infrastructure,” said **Missouri Farm Bureau President Garrett Hawkins**. “Missouri thrives when its rural communities are strong, and Governor Parson’s plan will help bridge the digital divide between cities and rural areas. It will provide enormous progress toward linking all parts of our state with the modern economy, precision agriculture, and telemedicine.”

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