

Press Release

CONNECTING ALL MISSOURIANS

Office of Broadband Development

Residents of the Lake of The Ozarks Council of Local Governments (LOCLG) region serving the counties of Camden, Laclede, Miller and Morgan will have an opportunity to weigh in on state plans to get every Missourian online when officials from the Missouri Office of Broadband Development visit **Camdenton City Hall on November 17, 2022, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

This meeting is being hosted by LOCLG, which provides a variety of economic development and planning services for local governments and communities within the region. **Please mark your calendars** to attend this meeting which will be held on **Thursday, November 17, 2022, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Camdenton City Hall, 437 US Highway 54, Camdenton, Missouri 65020.**

The State of Missouri is expected to receive more than \$500 million through two components of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA): the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program and the Digital Equity Act program. BEAD represents an unprecedented investment in broadband infrastructure across the state of Missouri. DEA addresses non-infrastructure barriers to getting online, like the inability to afford internet service or devices or digital skills deficits. The funds from these two programs will be used to implement the state's recently announced *Connecting All Missourians* initiative.

Both topics are on the agenda as OBD officials travel the state to hear from Missourians about how this money should be spent. Their input will be incorporated into the state's plans for BEAD and DEA funds.

"All across the state, communities struggle when they cannot take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the digital economy," said BJ Tanksley, Director of the Office of Broadband Development. "We understand that those opportunities look different in different parts of the state. In order to design programs that address the challenges in your area, we need to hear from you."

Meeting attendees will hear from OBD officials about the *Connecting All Missourians* initiative and measures local communities can take now to prepare themselves for this round of funding opportunities. They want to hear from attendees about the situation in their region: the specific challenges faced by residents who struggle to access the internet and the local resources, strategies, and know-how that can be used to overcome them.

The OBD is partnering with the state's 19 Regional Planning Councils and the University of Missouri in its planning efforts for the *Connecting All Missourians* initiative. For more information about engagement opportunities associated with this planning effort, visit ded2.mo.gov/connecting-all-missourians.

The OBD is an office of the Missouri Department of Economic Development. Along with BEAD and DEA funding, the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) brought an additional \$265 million in broadband funding to the state. OBD is currently reviewing applications for projects under this round of funding.

The Office of Broadband Development can be reached at broadband@ded.mo.gov.

If you are planning to attend the meeting and will need special assistance, please contact the LOCLG office at 573-346-5692 so that we can accommodate your needs.

*Lake of the Ozarks Council of Local Governments
985 E. Highway 54, P.O. Box 3553
Camdenton, Missouri 65020
573-346-5692 / loclg.org*