



# WEBMAIL

## THE NEXT CENTURY CITIES WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

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MAY 12, 2020

### EXPANDING BROADBAND ACCESS IN HANOVER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

**Local Insights from a Town Manager Determined to Connect Every Resident.**

Julia Griffin has over two decades of experience serving as the Town Manager of Hanover.

#### **Next Century Cities: What is the state of broadband connectivity in Hanover?**

**Julia Griffin:** Hanover, like so many rural communities in northern New England, has limited, more densely populated in-town neighborhoods that benefit from high-speed internet while outlying rural residential neighborhoods have either poor quality DSL provided on outdated copper wire plant or nothing at all. This is the case throughout New Hampshire.



**Hanover, NH**

#### **NCC: What concerns do Hanover residents have about broadband access?**

**JG:** I hear day after day from DSL customers who are very frustrated with very slow DSL speeds, poor quality and lousy customer service. As the host of Dartmouth College and adjacent to the City of Lebanon which hosts the largest trauma center hospital in NH and Vermont, many of our residents are affiliated with either institution and their work relies heavily on access to high quality internet.

#### **NCC: Has the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted broadband connectivity or spurred action to increase and/or diversify connectivity in Hanover? Are there specific challenges that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic?**

**JG:** Working from home and attending school from home has been supremely frustrating for those families who do not live in in-town Hanover as a result of poor to non-existent internet service. and you draw a very clear line between the internet haves and have nots, generally differentiated by the extent to which they live in highly rural areas.

#### **NCC: What are potential solutions to the broadband connectivity challenges in Hanover?**

**JG:** There is only one answer from where I sit. The federal government and each state must commit to investing significant sums of money into ubiquitous high speed internet deployment and must compel telecom providers to build out their networks.

**Read the full Member Spotlight [here](#).**



Louisville, KY

## UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

### **Developing Broadband Leadership Webinar Hosted by University of Illinois**

**Extension.** The four-part Developing Broadband Leadership webinar series is designed to show how communities are addressing short-term broadband connectivity issues while moving forward with longer-term solutions. Governor Jay Robert Pritzker will provide opening remarks on his broadband expansion initiative to connect Illinois residents. Economic Development Director Steve Mitchell of Carbondale, City Manager Mark Latham of Highland, and Alderman Brandon Adams of Jacksonville, Illinois will anchor the discussion. Participation is free. Register [here](#).

### **Next Century Cities Hosts a Q&A with FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel.**

Local officials are invited to join a private Q&A session with FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel. The Commissioner will share brief remarks on the agency's response efforts related to COVID-19 and other priorities. Local leaders from Holland, MI; Independence, OR; Keene, NH; Los Angeles, CA; Louisville, KY; and others will join the discussion. Use this [link](#) to register. Submit a quote or comment for this meeting's ex parte [here](#).

### **Webinar: Empowering Local Officials to Engage in State and Federal Policymaking.**

Next Century Cities invites local officials and advocates to join a webinar on successful state broadband initiatives and federal policy landscaping. The goal is to identify strategic ways for local leaders to advocate for universal broadband access in their communities. Mark your calendar for May 27th at 1:00pm ET. RSVP [here](#).

## MEMBER NEWS

### **Albuquerque, NM: USDA ReConnect Pilot Program to Provide Grant Funding to Rural New Mexico Cities.**

The United States Department of Agriculture provides loans and grants for the construction, improvement, and acquisition of broadband service in rural areas nationwide. This week several states received grants from the ReConnect program, including Kansas, Oklahoma, New Hampshire, and New Mexico. The areas east of Albuquerque will benefit from the grant provided to E.N.M.R. Telephone Cooperative. E.N.M.R. will use the funding to build a fiber-to-the-premises (FTTP) network serving 13 counties.



**Baltimore, MD**

**Baltimore, MD: Local Collective Commits to Closing the Digital Divide.** The Baltimore Digital Equity Coalition, a collective of 50 organizations, are working together to address Baltimore's digital divide through an intersectional approach supported by the varied areas of expertise present among the member organizations. Their goals include providing Internet access to disconnected homes, expanding Internet networks in unserved and underserved areas, refurbishing and distributing digital devices, and creating a platform for residents to learn how to properly use devices for their respective needs.

### **Egremont, MA: Massachusetts-based Program to Provide Wi-Fi Hotspots Statewide.**

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute, the MassTech Collaborative, and the government-owned network are working with local Internet service providers to provide Internet access to municipalities with little or no broadband connectivity through temporary Wi-Fi hotspot locations. Fifty-three communities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are underserved or unserved and would benefit greatly from the hotspot installations and capacity increases. The hotspots will be available through September 1st. One Wi-Fi hotspot location is active at the Town Hall in Egremont, MA, an NCC member town.

## MEMBER NEWS



San Antonio, TX

**Washington State University Installs Drive In Wi-Fi Hotspots at Satellite Locations.** Washington State University (WSU) has satellite campuses and offices in all 39 counties across the state, so the University system decided that installing Wi-Fi hotspots at each of these locations would be a great way to provide much-needed Internet access in each county. WSU students and students from area institutions will be able to use a connection designed for academic use. Non-student residents can also access the network through the public network. Washington is home to several NCC member municipalities including **Arlington, Burlington, Chewelah, Colville, Kenmore, Seattle, and Vancouver.**

**San Jose, CA: Lawmakers Okay Plan to Provide Digital Connectivity to All Students.** In an effort to narrow the city's digital divide, city lawmakers approved a measure to provide digital devices, Internet access, and digital literacy training to students. San Jose will partner with three service providers to invest in 4,200 small-cell wireless network antennae that will be installed on street poles across the city. City officials plan to utilize CARES Act funds to purchase devices for students in need.

**Texas Launches Initiative to Connect Students Statewide.** The Texas Education Agency and the office of Texas Governor Greg Abbott are collaborating to launch "Operation Connectivity", an initiative with the goal of closing the digital homework gap that exists among students statewide. Texas is home to seven NCC member cities including **Arlington, Austin, Bryan, College Station, Gainesville, Mont Belvieu, and San Antonio.**

## WORKING TOWARD UNIVERSAL BROADBAND ACCESS

### [Next Century Cities Responds to the FCC's Broadband Deployment Report.](#)

On April 24, 2020, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released their biannual Broadband Deployment Report. Using Form 477 data, the Commission claims at least 85% of Americans have access to fixed broadband services at speeds of 250 Mbps downstream and 25 Mbps upstream. Many Next Century Cities members disagree with that assessment. Review NCC's Policy Counsel Ryan Johnston's thoughts on why this conclusion is based on flawed and incomplete data [here](#).

### [Next Century Cities joined ally organizations in support of proposals to expand unlicensed spectrum for public use.](#)

Particularly in rural and Tribal areas, TV White Space (TVWS) technology helps expand broadband access for unserved and underserved populations. Review the FCC filing [here](#).

### [NCC's Executive Director Francella Ochillo participated in the first webinar of a six-part web series hosted by the Media Democracy Fund and the NetGain Partnership.](#)

The May 6th installment featured policy experts from the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, National Consumer Law Center, and American Indian Policy Institute. Panelists discussed the need for universal broadband access and investing in digital infrastructure. The recording of the webinar can be viewed [here](#).

## BROADBAND NEWS

### **Senator Ed Markey Announces Bill to Expand Internet Access.**

Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) introduced a new Bill that would require the FCC to reassess the National Broadband Plan, which was introduced more than a decade ago. Markey argues that the plan does not fit the country's current broadband landscape. **([The Washington Post](#))**

### **Land O' Lakes provides Wi-Fi access for More than 100 Co-op Locations.**

Land O' Lakes is a farmer-owned cooperative (co-op) that consists of nearly 1,000 member co-ops nationwide. The Fortune 500 company turned on Wi-Fi at over 100 locations in rural areas to provide Internet access for students, individuals, and teleworkers that need reliable broadband access. Land O' Lakes CEO Beth Ford sat down to discuss the importance of online connectivity in rural communities. **([The Star Tribune](#))**





## THE CENSUS AND YOUR COMMUNITY

Recently, the US Census Bureau made important operational adjustments to their #Census2020 timeline in response to the COVID-19 Outbreak. If you are curious about these changes or how they may affect your community, visit our website [here](#). Next Century Cities is committed to supporting local officials during this important count. Please contact [Lukas Pietrzak](#) with ways that we can improve our Census work.

## REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS & GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

**USF Nonprofit Grant Program of Wisconsin.** On Tuesday, May 5, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin announced its release of \$500,000 in grant funds to facilitate affordable access to telecommunications services. This includes funding for computer labs, broadband connections, and other internet related projects in Wisconsin. Projects must assist Wisconsin residents with high costs of telecommunications services for low-income residents or people with disabilities to obtain access. Past projects have included support for broadband adoption and digital literacy. Only nonprofit organizations will be considered. The application is due May 26th. Find the materials [here](#).

**Idaho Rebounds Offering Grants For Small Businesses.** As part of their reopening strategy, the State of Idaho is offering \$300 Million to small businesses with individual businesses able to request up to \$10,000. The grant is funded through the Coronavirus Relief Fund and is intended to support businesses that faced an interruption during the COVID-19 outbreak. This program will target Idaho businesses that did not receive substantial funding through the Paycheck Protection Program. For more information and to apply, please visit the Idaho Rebounds website [here](#).



## STAY CONNECTED

**Send us photos of your community and your next-generation broadband successes.** We want to share your good news and photos of our member communities. If you have photos you would like to include in our next newsletter, please send them to [Brittany-Rae Gregory](#).

**Does your city, town, or county have a new mayor, commissioner, or supervisor?** If so, please email [Lukas Pietrzak](#) so we can update our records.

**Send us your Requests for Proposals (RFPs).** Our [website](#) includes a subscription box that allows individuals to sign up for an alert whenever a new RFP is announced. Our goal is to get your RFP more attention, giving you better options during the selection process. We have already received dozens of subscriptions from a wide variety of vendors, so please be sure to [send us your RFPs](#). You can visit [this page](#) to read current and past RFPs from other cities as well.

**Is your city currently involved in civic engagement projects that leverage technology to benefit the community?** [Let us know!](#) We would like to feature your community in upcoming blog posts and reports.

**Is there someone from your community that you think should be added to this list?** [Send us](#) their contact information.