Transforming Agriculture

TRANSFORMING AGRICULTURE

High-speed connectivity, or broadband, has the potential to transform the agricultural industry in Missouri, including:

- providing an effective, low cost tool for farmers to market their products and reach new customers, selling directly to consumers or niche markets;
- reducing costs to farms and food processors to help increase their competitiveness;
- enabling essential fast Internet access as the number of local distributors of seed, fertilizer, equipment and the like decline -- a digital picture of a broken part can save money and time in repairs;
- providing farmers with access to business tools and other applications from around the world to run their farms more efficiently;
- enabling access to cloud computing to help better handle aspects from managing inventory to monitoring chemical applications or tracking markets;
- providing services that are essential to successfully manage a farm, market products and to communicate with suppliers, customers and markets around the world.

"Agricultural enterprises deliver high-quality food to the United States and the world. As our farmers and food processors compete in a global digital economy, broadband will help empower their businesses with applications that include everything from marketing to managing fertilizer applications. Broadband can help these valuable businesses bridge the digital divide and participate fully in local, national and world markets."

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC) NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN

The FCC's National Broadband Plan includes goals for our agriculture and rural communities. These goals serve as a starting point for regional discussions about the best way to deliver and use broadband technology to transform the agriculture industry across Missouri. The Plan's recommendations include:

Give local farms and their employees the broadband training they need to remain competitive in the global economy

Small businesses, including local farms across the state of Missouri, account for a majority of the more than 1.2 million new jobs generated by the growth of the Internet during the last 10 to 15 years. The Small Business Administration and the FCC's Office of Communications Business Opportunities should work together with leading private

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communications and technology firms to provide tools and training -- applying proven ideas and practices in Missouri's agricultural industry.

Keep rural farming communities competitive and innovative in the 21st century economy by putting broadband at the forefront of regional development

Communities without broadband technology will be left behind - on the outside looking in concerning the digital revolution. Broadband technology allows regions and communities to compete globally -- attracting new firms, investments and jobs. Local economic development plans and federal programs must take this into account when assessing the economic prospects of our agricultural community.

How can Broadband Transform the Agriculture Industry in my area?

Several other factors need to be considered along with implementing broadband technology. Are the right tools in place for our agricultural industry to leverage broadband? Do current processes and procedures allow enough room for use of broadband? Is everyone properly trained to use the technology effectively?

MoBroadbandNow, a five-year initiative launched by Gov. Nixon in 2009, coordinates efforts to obtain funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Commerce specifically set aside for broadband expansion. *MoBroadbandNow* seeks to expand broadband accessibility to 95 percent of the total population, a significant increase from the current projected accessibility of 79.7 percent.

MoBroadbandNow can provide education, awareness, and facilitate communication of funding opportunities for our agricultural industry.

But, we also need to have a fuller understanding of how the agricultural industry would like to use broadband, and what are the barriers and challenges you face integrating broadband into your agri-business?

Please share your stories with us at: http://transform.mo.gov/broadband/

Follow us on Twitter -- @MoBroadbandNow -- to stay up to speed on broadband news

How Will Broadband Impact the Day-to-Day Lives of Missourians

Capacity, choice and speed are some of the obvious benefits of expanded broadband. What may not be as obvious is the potential that comes about when technology opens that door to opportunity. It is safe to say the availability of a robust broadband network would touch some, if not many aspects of our citizens' lives.

Questions to Consider about the Agricultural Industry and Broadband

1. Are the right tools in place for the agricultural industry to leverage broadband? If yes, what tools are in place? If not, what hardware, software and other equipment do you need? Can you provide examples of how it would improve today's agricultural industry?

2. Do current processes and procedures encourage the use of broadband? What could you do differently with broadband that would promote its use in agri-business?

3. Is everyone properly trained to use broadband technology effectively? How can we better prepare the agricultural workforce to utilize broadband to its maximum benefit?

4. Does broadband access and availability meet minimum standards for effective agricultural applications? If yes, how? If not, what are the locations that need broadband enhancements and the challenges in getting it there?

5. Is broadband technology cost prohibitive? If so, what are some cost-saving measures that could be implemented to increase use?